THE PRICE OF MY SIN

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FORBIDDEN FLAME

Earl Christy

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• • •

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TALC
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MODERN ROMANCES

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September, 1937 Vol. 14, No. 4

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ART EDITOR

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The stories published in MODERN ROMANCES are true stories, and for that reason all names of persons and places are fictitious. If the name of a living person should occur, it is a coincidence.

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That "Thin Man" couple in their gayest, brightest romping romance . . . Bill's an artist in love with Myrna's sister — till Myrna comes along!

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METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER'S GREATEST YEAR 1937-38

HONEYMOONERS' TRIAL BY ERROR

So sinister was the disaster we headed into, our love might have been blasted

I was dimly aware that someone jumped on the running board and shouted, "What are you doing with this girl?"

BOB and I have been married two years. We live in a small town and hardly anything ever happens. But we are very content with each other. We are the envy of all our friends because we've never been known to quarrel. Never!

If Bob sees me getting the least bit impatient over something, he says: "Remember the time you wanted to sit alone?" Then I run to him, no matter how angry I am, and cling to him for dear life.

Times when he seems to be losing his temper, I say, "Remember you let me sit alone in the show?" Then he holds me very tight and of course we can't be mad at each other then.

No, we never quarrel now. But how we did quarrel the first week of our marriage!

I was an only child and quite used to having my own way. Bob was eldest in a family of eight children and was used to bossing the whole bunch. We both had quick tempers, and neither wanted to give in to the other. Our courtship had consisted of one long session of falling out and making up again. Yet we loved each other devotedly and we married, hoping some miracle would end all the disputes.

We decided on a week's honeymoon at a large nearby city. That was all we agreed upon. On the train, we wrangled about wiring for room reservations. That renewed the argument about the choice of hotel. Once settled at the hotel, we fought over where we should eat; how much the waiter should be tipped; what shows to see. It seemed we went to bed every night mad at each other. And this was our honeymoon! Yet we loved each other passionately. The quarrels in some funny way were an expression of that love. Each wanted what was believed the supreme test of love: the other's giving in.

One night we decided to see a movie. Bob wanted to see an adventure film, and I a comedy. We ended up by going to a gangster picture that neither of us wanted to see. We reached the theatre in a bitter, sullen mood. It was one of those cathedral-like places seating thousands of people. I wanted to sit in the center and Bob wanted to sit down front. In a huff, I walked away and allowed the impatient usher to show me to a seat. The one next to mine was empty, and I fully expected Bob to follow me and take it. But he, just as stubborn as I, sat about six rows ahead. My eyes stung with tears. I wanted Bob with me. I realized it had been a silly argument. If there had been a vacant seat next to his, I would have changed. I watched, hoping he'd turn around and smile at me—or relent, and come sit with me.

I had hardly settled my coat on the back of the seat when a refined, middle-aged woman crowded past my knees and took the seat next to me. She fussed around getting settled. Finally she whispered, "How long has the feature been on?"

ALTHOUGH I had been warned against getting friendly with strangers, I saw no harm in this quiet, plain woman. Having been brought up in a town where everyone spoke to everyone else, I answered promptly that I didn't know, having just arrived myself. I felt slightly uneasy. I didn't know why. I was lonesome, too. I was in a city of millions and didn't know a soul excepting Bob and here we were separated. The picture was very depressing. Sinister figures of the underworld moved with slow deliberation across the screen and committed crimes. The woman next to me was so fidgety that I got up to change my seat. Suddenly she dropped her purse. Before I could pick it up for her, she bent down, leaning against me to get it herself. I felt a sharp pin prick in my thigh. I sat down suddenly, letting out a small cry.

"I'm *so* sorry, my dear," whispered the woman. "The pin holding my flowers must have pricked you when I leaned over." She removed the bunch of artificial violets she had been wearing on her coat lapel. "It *is* a long pin! No wonder it went clear through your skirt. Well, it will do no more damage." She put flowers and pin in her purse. "I'm so sorry."

"It's all right," I whispered. People near us were getting annoyed at all the fussing. Then we both settled back to watch the picture. I didn't want to create further disturbance by crowding out past a row of people. Soon I felt myself becoming very drowsy. In spite of all my efforts, my eyes started to close. With a sudden jolt my head lolled over on my shoulder. From what seemed far away, I heard the woman say, "She's fainted! Help me get her out!"

She held my arm tightly and with (*Continued on page* 17)

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DAVID COPPERFIELD and A STAR IS BORN

RONALD COLMAN

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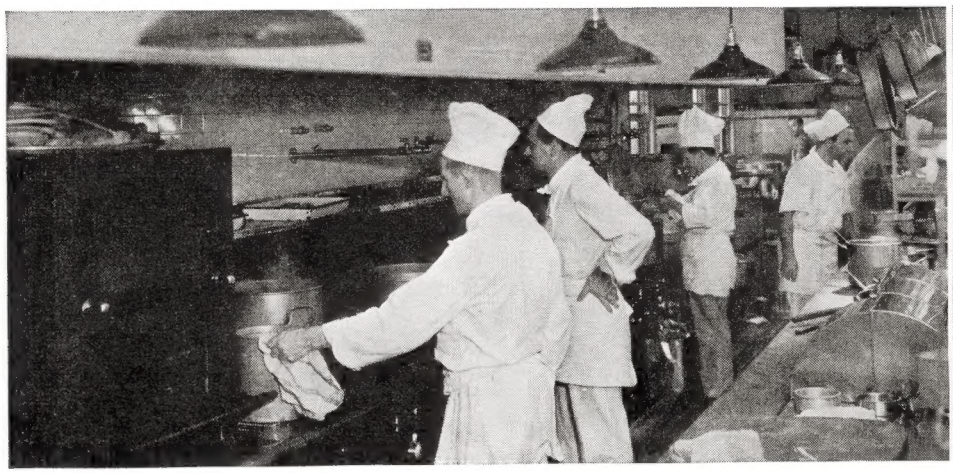
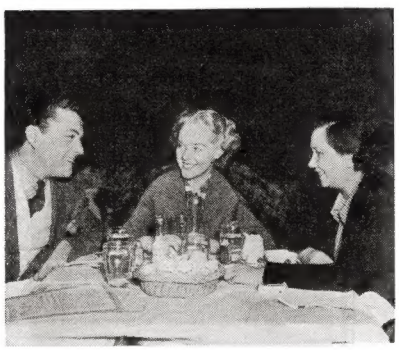
RELEASED THROUGH UNITED ARTISTS



Nick Janios manages the gleaming 20th Century-Fox's *Café de Paris* kitchen shown at the left

THE MODERN HOSTESS

reveals new ways of pleasing that exacting family of yours



A merry threesome: Tony Martin, Alice Faye, Patsy Kelly

And a pair having lunch—Patsy and Arthur Treacher

THIS article, which ends up by giving you what I think you'll agree are some interesting and unusual recipes, starts off appropriately enough as the story of two kitchens. *Your* kitchen, wherever it may be, designed to take care of the daily food needs of your own family. The other kitchen (pictured here) in Hollywood, out at 20th Century-Fox's charming studio restaurant, The *Café de Paris*. The one, for all I know, may be only a two-by-four kitchenette with a tiny sink and three-burner stove; the other filled with special ovens, steam tables, shelves and equipment galore. Yet they are far more alike, these two kitchens, than appears at first glance. For, after all, their purpose is identical; in each the preparation of food is its sole reason for existence.

Yes, the white-capped chefs painstakingly turning out marvelous dishes for famous film folk have much in common with you. Nor are they one bit more important in the general scheme of things than are you, fixing up a simple dinner in your own home. The chefs may have to please a more exacting clientèle than the one for which you cater; but in your own case it is well to remember how much of the health and happiness of your family depends upon the efforts you put forth daily within the four walls of that most important room in your house—the kitchen.

You can also view with pride the fact that in this "home workshop" of yours you are boss as well as chef, caterer as well as business manager. And are you, Mrs. Housewife, a good worker in your own little "closed shop"? First of all, do you have adequate tools and work tables for the job? In this respect you'd do well to follow the example of restaurant cooks by having, as they do, sharp knives, efficient equipment in good order, and adequate working surfaces for assembling, cutting, mixing, etc. Remember how many hours of the day you spend in the kitchen and try to spend them as pleasantly and comfortably as possible!

Secondly, have you made a point of learning, through actual study or in the valuable School of Experience, how to prepare appetizing dishes plan well-balanced meals? In short, do you set a good table? Or are you satisfied to "get by" at this varied, potentially interesting but undeniably exacting, task with only the slightest knowledge and the most tepid interest?

That may seem to you like rather a blunt way to express it. But come now, you must admit that the sort of meals you serve from that kitchen of yours is a matter that is entirely up to you. For these days the products of the world, carefully shipped in refrigerated cars and ships, or packaged, canned and bottled for convenience, are available to us all. The choice is limited only by the budget. How much more interesting then, will be the meals you set before those you gather around your table, if you take full advantage of the variety of products and the numerous recipes offered you on every hand.

Naturally the members of your own family who are the regular patrons of this "Home Restaurant" of yours are the ones who are sure to benefit in direct proportion to your interest, imagination and knowledge.

So, if you keep up your interest in this important task of meal-planning you'll derive as much pleasure from catering for the leading man—your husband.

Popular "Vic" McLaglen is savoring one of Nick's tasty culinary successes

band—and the child performers—your kids—as does Nick Janios who caters for the stars, directors, executives and players who patronize Fox's *Café de Paris.*

An interesting man, this Mr. Janios, who manages their cafeteria and coffee shop as well as the more elaborate restaurant just mentioned. His job, he says, necessitates his being a financier, executive and diplomat. (Every housewife will recognize the requirements as being identical with those she is supposed to live up to in her own job!) Nick Janios' schooling for this role of his has been a varied and instructive one. Starting in the kitchen of a big New York hotel he became successively busboy, waiter, head waiter and now manager. Says he likes the job of catering for the stars and proves it by knowing what their favorite dishes are, offhand.

If you were to ask him, as I did, the most important thing to remember in planning menus, he'd answer without hesitating, "Variety." Don't slip lazily into a rut, serving the same old standbys, cooked in the selfsame fashion, year in, year out. Instead, try out new products as they are advertised and experiment with novel ways of fixing up the foods you already know you like. Then the family will not have any excuse to greet the dishes that come out of *your* kitchen with that uncomplimentary but alas familiar phrase, "What, again?"

At the end of this article, for example, you'll find some really "different" recipes. They happen to be those given me by Mr. Janios himself, all carefully written out by him in longhand, all conscientiously tested by me in my own kitchen so that I could be sure these restaurant-inspired dishes were also practical for home use. Why don't you try them, too? For besides the fun of knowing, as you fix them up, that they come from such an interesting source, you are also sure of discovering a couple of new culinary wrinkles.

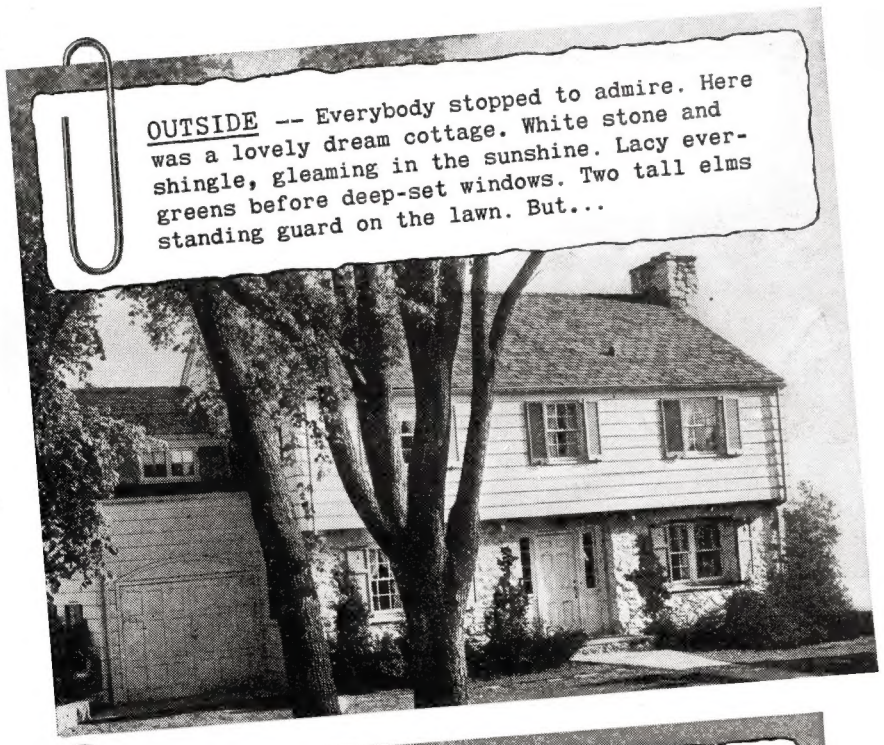
For instance, did you ever think of using beer as the liquid part of a "dipping batter"? I'll bet not, but wait until you try the one I'm giving you on page 64. No wonder the *Chinese Fried Shrimps,* prepared in this special fashion, are so frequently ordered by Arthur Treacher, the amusing "Jeeves" of the cinema. And wait till you try the sauce that goes with it!

Did you ever add canned chicken soup and paprika to a veal dish to give this rather bland meat a special flavor? Well, maybe you have, but not quite, I imagine, in the way suggested by Mr. Janios, who listed it as Tony Martin's "favorite dish on the menu."

Did you ever add to mayonnaise the few "extras" which turn it into *Thousand Island Dressing,* thereby giving special distinction to many salads and particularly to Alice Faye's best-liked luncheon special, *Salade Café de Paris?* Which, by the way, is so easy to prepare!

And have you ever had a *Ruby Pie?* "It's the best dessert ever!" according to Victor McLaglen, whose word bears considerable weight when you learn from "Nick" that "Vic" is such an enthusiastic eater that he generally orders two portions of everything! Another hearty

(*Continued on page* 64)


OUTSIDE -- Everybody stopped to admire. Here was a lovely dream cottage. White stone and shingle, gleaming in the sunshine. Lacy evergreens before deep-set windows. Two tall elms standing guard on the lawn. But...

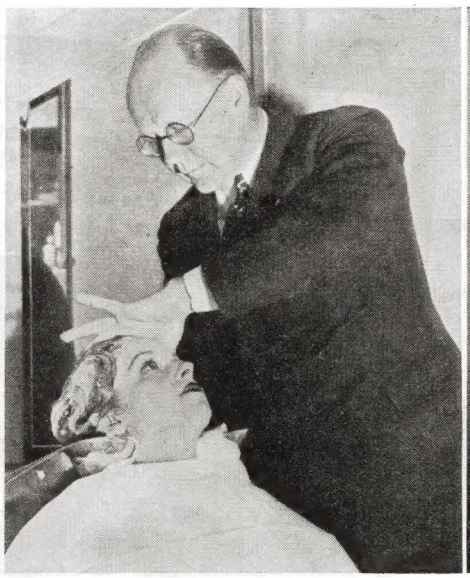
INSIDE -- Those who entered, criticized in whispers. Why? The rooms were charmingly decorated. Colonial furniture in perfect taste. Ruffly curtains framing a garden window. Quaint hooked rugs on polished oak. What was wrong?

ANSWER -- The loveliest home can be spoiled by tattle-tale gray in your curtains and linens -- that dingy color that shows they aren't really clean. So why use lazy soaps? Change to Fels-Naptha! It brings you richer golden soap and lots of naptha to loosen dirt thoroughly and wash it all away. It makes linens, curtains and all your clothes so beautifully fresh and snowy they add charm to your home instead of spoiling it. Get a few golden bars today and see how easy it is to...

Banish "tattle-tale gray"
with Fels-Naptha Soap!

COPR. FELS & CO., 1937

Emile demonstrates the vigorous massage so essential to a shampoo



Then comes the rinse to remove every last remnant of soapy substance

Deft fingers skillfully comb the hair to prepare it for the final wave

The finished coiffure—a harmony of soft, glossy ringlets to frame enchantingly a young and lovely face

BEAUTY ADVICE

BY MARY BIDDLE

To achieve lovely hair and a chic coiffure, follow these rules from a professional

THIS month I can promise you a hair-raising adventure on your flight to the stars. Emile, of Rockefeller Center, who cares for the heads of the famous in New York, gives you a headlong boost up the ladder to perfection.

I wish you could all go to Emile and experience the glory of a real and thorough shampoo—then top your topknot with one of his incomparable waves. However, if you live too far away don't throw these pages down in disgust and disappointment for you will find Emile has been very generous in passing along the latest news in hair beauty.

Emile, and the other smart hairdressers I consulted, are most interested in the chic of your coiffure. And how is drab, wispy hair to be wrought into a glorious halo, a sophisticated page-boy, or exquisite ringlets? Here are some Hair-do's and Hair-don'ts from Emile that will chart your way to making the very best of your crowning glory if you will apply the rules I gave you earlier in this series of Stick-to-it-iveness—Right Treatment—and Attention to Every Small Detail.

DO give your hair a thorough shampoo before waving. This assures pliancy of the hair and thus a softer wave. DON'T give your hair a swish and swoosh and consider it adequately shampooed and rinsed. Massage strenuously. Rinse several times to remove all traces of soap.

DO give your hair vigorous brushings and massages between shampoos. DON'T be afraid brushing and massage will ruin your wave. The wave is encouraged by stimulating the scalp and normalizing the oiliness of the scalp.

DO insist on a wave lotion that is kind to your hair. DON'T coat the hair and scalp with gum and goo that hides all trace of luster and stifles the hair. If you can't find a suitable lotion (but you should be able to) then use water. The wave may not last as long with water, but your hair will be with you twice as long as it would if you used an inferior lotion.

DO protect your hair from the ravages of the weather and seasons. DON'T expose it for long hours to the sun or constant wettings with salt or fresh water and expect it to keep its even coloring and soft texture.

DO select a coiffure that has some relation to your features. DON'T copy someone else's coiffure unless you know it attractively frames your face and is suitable to your figure. Consider your coiffure as you would your hat—stand before a full length mirror and study it from every angle.

DO give your permanent a fair chance at life. DON'T get a permanent in hair that is in poor condition and then add insult to injury by continued neglect. A permanent wave to be satisfactory should be put into healthy hair and should be cared for by brushing, massage and scalp treatments.

DON'T groan, girls, and say that you have more on your minds than hair! These do's and don'ts are not really complicated and when you see how readily your hair responds to even a little treatment you will feel amply repaid. The hair flourishes so beautifully and eagerly under

kindness and care that you should find it a real pleasure as well as a duty to aid it.

While scouting around in search of sound advice on the care of the hair and scalp and especially as regards that universal affliction, dandruff, I made some discoveries of interest to you.

The first step in the treatment of dandruff is absolute cleanliness and banishment of scaly dandruff deposits. Now I have found a shampoo that dissolves both the dry flaky dandruff and the oily, wax-like dandruff. So whatever your dandruff problem you will find its cure in this shampoo.

You may have this shampoo at your favorite beauty salon or you may give it to yourself at home. Here is the way to get best results with this shampoo.

APPLY to the dry hair by pouring it from the bottle directly on the scalp a little at a time. Separating the hair facilitates this. Don't neglect the edges of the hair around the forehead and temple where face creams and powder have crept into the hair line.

MASSAGE without using any water until the hair becomes sticky. This massage will loosen and dissolve scalp accumulations. Now add a small amount of warm water and continue massaging. You will note a rich, creamy lather forms instantly. Gradually add more water and continue to massage, removing the lather by handfuls.

RINSE thoroughly. Running water that graduates from warm to cool is best, but if not available then rinse in several waters.

DRY with a medium weight bath towel. This type of towel is most absorbent and will not leave lint in the hair. Drying the hair outdoors in the sun and breeze is especially nice if possible.

Now in this age where grooming is more to be desired than beauty, we just don't hold with the old expression "charming disorder." Every lock of hair must know its place! That means selecting a hairstyle that is suitable to the texture of your hair and to the occasion, as well as its becomingness! If your hair is extremely fine then don't dare go in for elaborate coiffures or you will find that regardless of how painstaking you have been the first puff of wind will make you frowsy looking!

A GUIDE book to a becoming coiffure would probably read thus:

Rule One: A center part or a high side part will make the face appear long and thus slenderer. The center part calls attention to the nose and regularity of the features so if your features won't bear too much emphasis then choose the high side part.

Rule Two: The low side part gives width to the face.

Rule Three: Don't hide your forehead—be proud of it. If you must have bangs, don't make them a concealing bush but rather let them be soft, short and either curled or waved.

Rule Four: Hair brushed back from the forehead and worn with slanting horizontal waves or curls is slenderizing to the full face.

Rule Five: The very long bob is youthful when worn by the young, otherwise it calls attention to the age. The stout person with the short neck should avoid too long bobs for they tend to make the neck appear still more negligible.

Rule Six: The girl with glasses will find the contour wave most becoming; if she wants curls let them begin below her glasses.

Rule Seven: If you have a widow's peak, then capitalize on it. The skillful use of an eyebrow pencil will emphasize a vague peak.

Rule Eight: Fussiness in coiffures has yielded to simplicity and the few curls well placed.

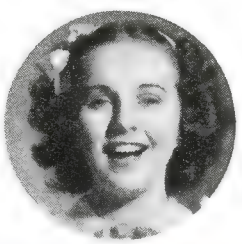
Rule Nine: First and last, the hair frames the face. Let this frame be flattering.

Yes, the hair does frame the face—and what about the face within that frame?

CINDERELLA FROCKS inspired by

Deanna Durbin

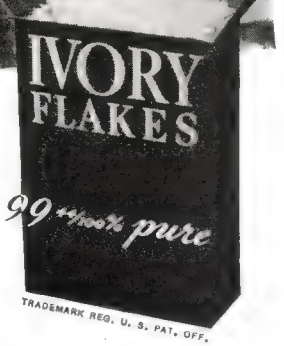
New Universal Pictures' Star



THEY'RE IVORY-WASHABLE

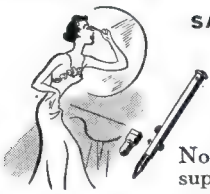
Back to school, looking pretty as a picture in Deanna Durbin Fashions! And they're sensible, too! Every print, every gay trimming has been Ivory-Flakes tested for washability. Follow the washing instructions tagged to every Cinderella Frock to be sure colors stay bright as new through a whole school year.

Psychologists say: "Teen-age girls should look their best. It creates a sense of well-being . . . makes studies easier." Give your daughter lots of these delightful Cinderella Frocks. Keep them sparkling with frequent Ivory Flakes tubbings.



Ivory Flakes keep fabrics new . . . colors bright . . . because they're pure

Don't be a Chrysanthemum!



SAYS Jane Heath

No girl can look truly super-smooth and glamourous with brows running rampant or a fringe of short hairs sprouting from her hair line. TWEEZETTE is the little beauty implement for removing face hairs automatically and painlessly, and a cap covers the pluckers so you can carry it in your purse wherever you go! $1.

don't forget

It isn't enough just to de-fringe yourself . . . the glamour girls all have that well-groomed look too! . . . Sleek, shining brows like wings . . . long, silky lashes. . . . KURLENE is a scientific formula for grooming—so always stroke your brows and lashes with it before retiring. Use KURLENE for daytime, too, and notice the lovely rainbow lights a touch of it puts in your lashes! 50c and $1.

remember

Spell eye beauty, "K-U-R-L-A-S-H," for only a frame of curling lashes can bring out the greatest charm of your eyes. So slip your lashes into KURLASH every day. In only 30 seconds they'll be perfectly and naturally curled without heat, cosmetics or practice. $1.

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TWISSORS—the tweezers with scissor-handles.

SHADETTE—eye shadow, in twelve subtle shades and gold and silver for evening.

LASHTINT MASCARA—in either compact or liquid-waterproof form; and

LASHPAC—a purse-size mascara in lipstick case with a built-in brush for instant use.

Kurlash

MAIL THIS TODAY

To: JANE HEATH, *Dept. D-9*

The Kurlash Co., Rochester, N. Y.
The Kurlash Co. of Canada, at Toronto, 3

Please send me, free, your booklet on eye beauty, and a personal eye-beauty plan. Here is my coloring:

*Eyes*_____ *Hair*_____ *Complexion*_____

*Name*_____

*Address*_____

*City*_____ *State*_____

Copyright 1937 The Kurlash Company, Inc.

Well, I have run across two very interesting cosmetics for the blemished or oily skins—and news of this type is news! All of you with a blemished skin and a conscience will cringe a bit before applying make-up. Why? Because you may feel you are aggravating the trouble and you definitely feel you are doing it no good. The same thing is true again when you reach for the jar of cream to thoroughly remove this make-up. I am sure you will hail the powder and cream I am going to tell you about as real finds!

The powder is antiseptic! You would never guess it from the lovely skin-blending shades and its deliciously fine texture and its nice fresh scent, but it is truly antiseptic. While it beautifies it carries on its work of healing. The cream is antiseptic, too. It will not add more oil to an already too oily skin. It is a thorough and gentle cleanser and it gets right to work on unsightly blemishes and unruly complexions.

This month there is a free sample offer of the powder—just fill in the coupon and check the shade of the powder you prefer and then watch two cosmetic problems vanish. Of course you will want to know the name of the grand cream, too, so I'll send that along with the powder.

Mary Biddle
MODERN ROMANCES MAGAZINE
149 Madison Avenue, New York, N. Y.

Please send me absolutely free the name of the cream and the sample of powder in Natural... Brunette...

Name..... .....
(Print in pencil)

Address.....
(Street and number)

City....., State.....

End-of-the-Season Pick-ups

(*Continued from page 63*)

And, regardless of what season it is, you can always fall back on this versatile garment because it's always a backdrop for new scenery!"

Bette went on to say that this present version of the dress is grand for business, general daytime wear and a back-to-school model for high school and college girls. The scarf brightly sets off the black with its riot of red, yellow, blue and green stripes on white. Cleverly it forms a vestee effect, being shirred into a band at the waist with the ends arranged in a smart design below. The turban is an off-the-face affair made from the same silk.

ANY of you, who are handy with a needle, can copy this for your own use. As the season progresses into cool weather, Bette suggests that velvet or satin be used for this same scarf-vest effect. Try out warm fall rust or red tones against the black for striking results.

White suede gloves and a pouch-shaped black suede bag are the accessories Bette chooses to give this an extra fall emphasis.

Scarfs, neckwear, jewelry and bows are only a few of the inexpensive do-dads which can change this practical dress from season to season. Not to mention the infinite variety of hat, bag and shoe combinations which are possible. Here, truly, is the ace budget hint for you who have "only so much to spend."

Continuing the sheer and dark theme, Bette recommends black lace over a black taffeta slip for a dress-up afternoon costume and for practically any informal evening party you attend. Made like the popular redingote, Bette's dress only buttons part way, the skirt opening at front to show the rustling taffeta foundation beneath. Stitched taffeta, in a narrow banding, edges the lace and a taffeta ribbon ties as a belt. The five strand pearl necklace worn under the lace is a smart detail.

"Although I am wearing a straw hat with flower trim," Bette said, "here's the perfect opportunity for trying out your first velvet hat of the season. It won't look at all forced when worn with black lace and it will give you a big kick in the wearing."

Her accessories are black suede gloves which are gathered into a clip-like ornament on the arm, open-toed and heelless suede stepin pumps, and a beautiful petit point bag with gold frame and chain handle.

Probably you won't need to add a freshening touch to the evening side of your wardrobe, but in case you should, Bette again suggests sheer black for the perfect between-season evening gown. One that can match its smartness favorably with the lamés and velvets of later fall is a black spider-web lace over a pink foundation. The lace dress is made with a high, round neckline in front, cut moderately low at back. Full, puff sleeves keep this out of the too formal class. Over it all, Bette frequently wears a full skirted redingote of sheer black marquisette. A black belt fastened with a square rhinestone-studded buckle girdles both the dress and redingote, when it is worn.

The shortest of black suede gloves, which are bound in silver kid and fastened with rhinestone buttons, are a giddy Davis touch in the accessory line. Black sandals are piped in silver to match the gloves and Bette carries a small, circular black evening bag.

Incidentally, if you are taking August vacation trips, a black or pastel colored lace is the best evening gown to pack. Lace is one of the few fabrics which can be taken right out of bag or trunk, shaken out, and worn without the benefit of an ironing.

SPICE colors will be among the first to put a new flavor in your early fall wardrobe. Such delectable sounding shades as cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, rust, burnt orange and mustard are coloring both the accessory and costume picture.

And I want to stress a point here, before I forget, although the three Davis outfits described are in black, don't forget that you can do exactly the same stunts with brown, dark green or blue. Blue, however, is the least desirable color choice for later fall use because it is more definitely identified with early spring and summer fashions. There are some who wear navy blue all year round and do it very smartly but in general, I think brown or black are more adaptable.

Maureen O'Sullivan has an amusing fad idea that school gals should adore. It's an autograph scarf—and you know what a rush for autographs there always is when a star makes a public appearance. Well, Maureen, it seems, turns the tables on her friends and makes them write their names in pencil on a white scarf she has. In her spare moments she embroiders over these penciled names in gay colored thread, thus showing her best friends' famous signatures to the world when she wears the scarf. Think what fun it would be to get the entire football team's John Henry's on your scarf this coming fall!

If This Were You—

(*Continued from page 102*)

hurry home each night to take care of me.

After I was well again, I got work in a railroad shop here where I am still employed. And then, when I was twenty, I met Esther, the girl who is the real problem.

That sounds sort of queer, Mrs. Alden, but maybe you will know what I mean when I explain more. I don't mean she is to blame for things. I mean that I love her and want to marry her, and she loves me, but for us marriage seems impossible.

You see, we have been engaged for four years. I am twenty-five now, and Esther is a year younger. She never had a home except an orphanage where she was left; she knows nothing about her parents. But I don't care about that. She's the one girl in the world for me.

It seems sort of strange that I met her through my mother. I say strange, because my mother hates her so now. But Esther was in the office of the laundry where my mother worked when I was hurt. She was just a kid at the time, a checker. After I got a job in the shop and had worked awhile, I made Mother stop the laundry. It was too hard for her and I made enough to live on if we were careful.

One night we were marketing and Esther came along and spoke to my mother. They had not seen each other for some time. Mother seemed glad to see her, and introduced me. I hadn't paid much attention to girls before, because I'd been too busy working. But I paid attention to this one. She was sweet and pretty and quiet, and somehow I knew I wanted to see this girl again.

The next week we went marketing again. I figured it so we would be in the same market about the same time as the week before. I was hoping Esther would be there, and she was.

Well, I can only say that we saw each other more and more often after that and a year later I asked her to marry me. We were about the happiest people in the world, I guess, when we became engaged.

When I told my mother that Esther and I were going to be married, she was angry. I was surprised. She started to cry and said, "That's the way with children. You spend the best years of your life working for them, slaving until you are ready to drop, and when you need them, when you are getting old, they marry and let you shift for yourself."

I told her she was wrong. "Mother, you're silly to talk like that. Who said you were old? You're only thirty-nine now, for you were married when you were just a kid. You talk like you were sixty."

She kept on crying and said, "I might as well be. I feel like that after the hard work I've done. And don't forget I did it for you. And this is what I get. Now a girl comes along and takes you away from me."

Well, we didn't talk any more about it then. I told Esther and she thought Mother would get used to the idea if we waited. But she hasn't. Every time the subject is brought up, she just cries and carries on worse than ever.

Esther and I have waited four years now and are no nearer being married. She has saved every cent she could and has put the money into things for the home we've planned. I've saved some too, for I've worked hard and am now a department foreman. But what are we to do?

Esther wants a home. She never had one, as I've told you, and her whole heart is set on it. Must we go on forever like this? Yet when I speak of marriage, my mother gets hysterical. I've told her she can live with us. Esther is willing, even though she knows how my mother acts. But she just gets angry and refuses. Once she said, "The idea of you suggesting such a thing. The idea of you even wanting to marry a girl out of an orphanage. She doesn't even know who her parents were. She may be illegitimate for all you know. Live with her? Not if it was the last place on earth."

So that is how things stand, Mrs. Alden. Must Esther and I give up our whole life because of my mother's attitude? I mean, I realize my duty to her and appreciate all she has done for me. She suffered the agony of bringing me into the world. She cared for me when I was a helpless baby. She protected me from my drunken father. She worked to support me when I was a child and again when I was laid up by an accident. All that I know. But she seems to feel she owns me like she would own a horse she worked for and bought, and that she ought to have the whole say about my life. She feels that if I go against her wishes I am ungrateful and gets in such a state that I've had to call a doctor several times. He warned me that she had a bad heart from overwork, and that a shock might kill her. Besides, she has threatened to kill herself if I marry. Then I never could forgive myself.

(*Continued on page 16*)

Glare-Proof! —to flatter you in hard sunlight

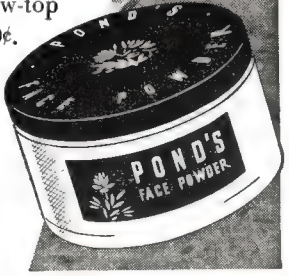
Strong sunlight throws a hard light on your face
Pond's "Sunlight" Shades catch only the softer rays of the sun —soften your face

Pond's 3 "Sunlight" shades

Summer Brunette
Sunlight (LIGHT)
Sunlight (DARK)

This year Pond's has *three* "Sunlight" shades! Choose your shade according to your tan. Blended to catch only the softer rays of the sun. Pond's "Sunlight" Shades soften the hard glare of the sun on your face. Flatter you outdoors and in!

Try them at our expense. Or buy a box, and if you do not find it more flattering than ordinary sun-tan shades, send us back the box, and we will refund purchase price plus postage. Decorated screw-top jars, 35¢, 70¢. New big boxes, 10¢, 20¢.



Test them FREE! in glaring Sunlight

Pond's, Clinton, Conn., Dept. 9MR-PJ. Please rush me, free, Pond's 3 new "Sunlight" Shades, enough of each for a 5-day test. (This offer expires Nov. 1, 1937)

Name_____

Street_____

City_____ State_____

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The real me—who had quivered to life at the touch of Martin's lips—was now living a dream life in memory of my dead lover

TRUE LETTERS

How Long Can a Memory Last?

DEAR EDITOR:

When I was twenty I met and fell in love with Martin Ambler. We planned to be married at once. But the night before our wedding, Martin was crossing the street, absorbed in his thoughts, and a truck ran over and killed him.

How dispassionately I am able to write it now! Yet when I look back and see how it raked me apart, how it shook and blackened my life, all the horrors of those days come back. I cried until there were no tears left. I wrote him passionate letters, I went to his grave every week-end with flowers and would stand there, murmuring to him, sure that he could hear me.

I thought I would never love again, and I was satisfied not to have anything in my life but the memory of Martin. For three years my life was one long memory of him. I went to work as I had before, I ate and slept as before. But the real me—the girl who had quivered to life at the touch of Martin's lips—was now living a dream life in memory of my dead lover.

Carl Channing, my boss, was awfully kind when the accident happened. I had told him that I was leaving to be married, and when I broke down, crying on his desk, and told him what had happened, he put his arm around me and said, "Take a week or two off. Then come back again, and we'll start over."

I never really started over, though. The girl who came back to work was a different girl from the one who'd worked there before. Once or twice he asked me when I was going to snap out of it, but I didn't answer. I did my work, kept my eyes on the letters, and went to Martin's grave every week.

About two years after Martin's death, Carl asked me to have lunch with him for the first time. I smiled briefly, "Sorry." He flushed a little, but only said, "Some other time?" and when I didn't answer, he pretended to be interested in a booklet on his desk.

Then, a week or so later, he said, "I'm stuck with some tickets for a new show. A college pal was coming in from the West—but he couldn't make it, after all, and I've got these tickets. Would you like to go with me, Miss Fuller?"

"No, thanks," I said.

The faint pink in his face deepened. But he didn't say anything. Just before five o'clock he ventured, "What do you do with your week-ends, anyway?"

"I go to Westchester," I answered, truthfully.

His eyes had a funny gleam. "Where, in Westchester?"

I put my hat on. "Does it make any difference, Mr. Channing?"

"Yes, it does," he said suddenly. He took my hand and looked at me very directly. "I think you go to the cemetery, don't you? That's why you have no time for me. That's why you're so—so preoccupied."

"What if I do?"

"It's not good for you, Alice. It's not healthy. Life goes on, you know. You ought to pick up the pieces and start over."

"That's my business," I said bitterly. He couldn't possibly know how he was hurting me. He couldn't know how every word of his brought back, more poignantly than ever, the ache of my loss.

He stood aside and let me pass. We never referred to that conversation any more. But after that, he did not ask me to lunch or the theatre again. Instead, he began to call up a girl named Fleur. It seemed to me a silly name, and I wondered if it were really the name she'd been christened. But of course I didn't ask him. Soon she was telephoning him as often as he was phoning her. They had many dates, and he called the florist to send her flowers, and he took her to lunch very often.

When I first saw her come into the office I had a queer,

Editor's Note: MODERN ROMANCES, *a magazine written by its readers, is devoted to a portrayal of real life. Each month hundreds of readers write me letters about their personal problems, large and small, and tell me how they have solved them. In some of the letters there is humor, in others pathos; in some there is joy and in others tragedy. All of them are interesting human documents. As I feel that you too will enjoy this revealing personal contact with your fellow readers, I am presenting you with several letters that came to my desk this past month.*

I will pay ten dollars for all publishable letters of one thousand words or less received from readers of MODERN ROMANCES. *Address me at 149 Madison Ave., New York City.*

THE EDITOR

unaccountable pang of jealousy. She was slim and blonde, and dressed in a slick, expensive dress. Going home that night to my room, sitting there reading over the letters that Martin had sent me, I was dissatisfied for the first time. I seemed to see Carl Channing's brown eyes and feel again his warm hands on mine. I looked at Martin's picture. I wondered, suddenly, if he would want me to mourn him forever. But in the next moment, I knew that no one would ever be able to take his place. I bowed my head on my arms and cried.

"How did you like Fleur?" asked Carl, next morning.

"She's beautiful," I said shortly.

"Not any prettier than you."

I stared at him. "Yes, she is."

"No, she's not. But she's full of life and laughs a lot. That makes the difference." He pushed aside the papers on his desk. "You don't care about anything, do you?"

"I don't know what you mean."

He said violently, "I'm crazy about you! I was in love with you before you ever became engaged to Martin! But you didn't know it. And now . . . you're all wrapped up in his ghost. Oh, I know you loved him, but how long can a memory last? Aren't you ever going to rouse yourself and pick up your life again? Surely he can't have wanted you to cry over him forever. He wanted you to be happy, didn't he?"

"I *am* happy!" I snapped.

As if for spite, he picked up the telephone and called Fleur. I was in the next office—the little "work office"—when she came in. He greeted her, and I heard her laugh. Then, just as I picked up some papers and got ready to return to my desk outside, I heard her asking, "Where's the little Indian?"

"Indian?" Carl's voice was annoyed.

"Yes, the little girl who thinks so much of the custom they have in India. Suttee, isn't it called? You know, where the widow jumps on the funeral pyre and is burned alive with the body of her dead husband?"

Carl said, "How horrible!"

"She's committing moral suttee, isn't she? But I believe she enjoys it. If she doesn't look out, her whole life will be twisted." Then she laughed, "I don't know why I'm telling you this. I think it's because I feel so sorry for her."

My heart was going more slowly than it ever had, and I seemed to be strangling. She dared to call me a widow! Committing moral suttee! I hated her!

But during the two hours that they were gone, while I sat in the empty, quiet office, I couldn't stop my mind from going around and around. Yes, I had been mourning Martin. I had stopped most of the normal activities of life except my work. All at once I wondered what would have happened to me if I hadn't this sane, calm office to come to every day, and Carl's company.

When Carl came back, without Fleur, I asked him, "Did she mean me to hear?"

"Oh—my God—Alice, I'm so sorry—"

"It was true enough. I just wondered if she wanted me to hear."

"Fleur's not unkind," he said. He looked at me for a moment, then he added, "She's pretty—I want to—feel more strongly about her. But I can't. I keep thinking of you."

Now his mouth was pressing down on mine. "Oh, Alice, can't I *get* to you?"

The burn of his kiss tore through me. I felt it on my lips and in my throbbing throat. I felt it in my suddenly weakened knees, and in my racing blood.

"Give me a chance," he was pleading. "I love you. Let me show you that I can make you happy—make you love life again."

Why did I suddenly hear Martin's voice, talking to me? Telling me the same things he had told me that night before he was killed. "I love you, Alice. I want you to be happy."

Three empty years I had given to his memory. And suddenly, I saw that he wouldn't have wanted me to do that. Giving up things, making myself withdrawn and abnormal, wasn't the right way to revere his memory.

"I've been such a fool, Carl!"

He held me tightly. I whispered, "I'm going to start over. I'm going to do what Martin would have wanted. . . ."

Today, after five years of marriage to Carl, Martin's memory is still sweet, but it's not the all-enveloping interest in my life. I love my husband too dearly, and our two children. I love life and all the happy things that Carl and the children and I do together. That's normal. When I see a woman grieving for a dead man—even for a child—I want to tell her my story.

Mrs. B. W., Maryland

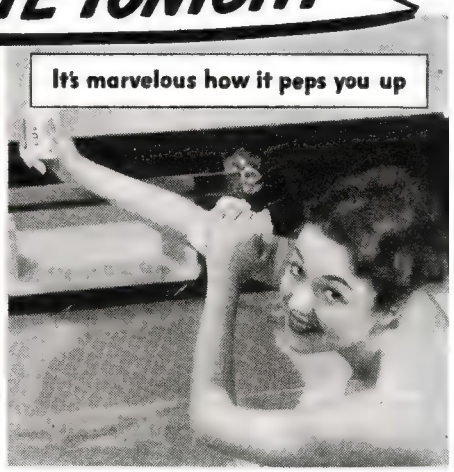
PRIZE WINNERS! JUNE CRITICISM CONTEST

Do you like to enter contests? Yes? Then you will enjoy our "easy to win" Letter Criticism Contest. If we have aroused your interest turn to page 24 of this issue.

The contestants listed below wrote prize winning letters in the June contest and have received the following cash awards:

Mrs. S. MacCullough, Los Angeles, Calif., $15; Edith P. Waller, Cheyenne, Wyoming, $10; Mrs. L. V. Prosser, Blackwell, Okla., $5; Mrs. Louisa Buckland, Kadoka, South Dakota, $5; George B. Long, Swansboro, N. C., $5; Ella E. Morton, Pawtucket, R. I., $5; Reverend Leslie E. Dunkin, South Bend, Ind., $5.

ADVICE TO GIRLS WITH A DATE TONIGHT



This luxurious Beauty Bath protects daintiness

SO *foolish* to risk the least offense against daintiness! A Lux Toilet Soap beauty bath leaves you *sweet* from top to toe. The ACTIVE lather sinks *deep*—carries away stale perspiration, dust and dirt.

You step out feeling refreshed, *sure* of yourself. A delicate fragrance clings all about you—the choice, exquisite perfume of Hollywood's favorite soap! 9 out of 10 screen stars use Lux Toilet Soap!

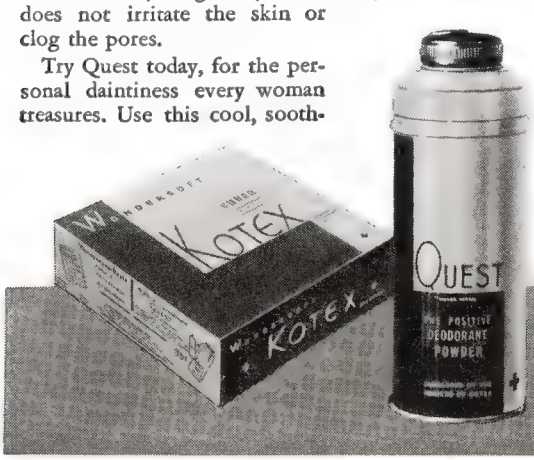
QUEST...is completely effective
ON SANITARY NAPKINS

● Why take chances now that *complete* protection is so easily obtainable? The makers of Kotex bring you a new deodorant powder named *Quest* that *positively* destroys all types of napkin and body odors!

Quest is utterly effective. Even on sanitary napkins it makes personal daintiness a reality. It prevents perspiration offense; assures all-day-long body freshness, yet it does not irritate the skin or clog the pores.

Try Quest today, for the personal daintiness every woman treasures. Use this cool, soothing powder on sanitary napkins. Also after the bath, under arms and for foot comfort. Quest is unscented, thus it does not cover up the fragrance of lovely perfume.

And, surprising as it may seem, Quest costs no more than other kinds . . . only 35c for the large two-ounce can at your favorite drug counter. Buy it today.



QUEST

FOR PERSONAL DAINTINESS

Use it with Kotex

(Continued from page 13)

But I am a grown man, Mrs. Alden, and I want my own home, and the girl I love, and children of our own. Am I wrong in that?

Won't you ask some of your readers who have faced the same thing to help me?

FRANK DRAPER

You've all been in a similar position sometime, when your will and the will of your parents clashed. Or perhaps your will as a parent clashed with that of your child. What was your reaction? What will be your advice? Write your opinion, addressing the letter to Frank Draper, MODERN ROMANCES, *149 Madison Ave., New York City. And if you have a question of your own you wish to discuss with someone, no matter what it is about, write your problem and send it with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to either Virginia Alden or Kirby Eaton,* MODERN ROMANCES, *149 Madison Avenue, New York City, and you will receive a confidential reply.*

LOST SWEETHEART
Answering Beth Parmley

Beth was engaged to her boss whom she had known since she was a girl. He is ambitious, and became infatuated with the daughter of a prominent man who could be of material aid in his business, and his love for Beth waned. She left his employ, and went back home where she secured a clerical job in a hospital. Here she learned about Edith, the girl who had won Frank from her. She learned that Edith at one time had come there under an assumed name, to bear an illegitimate child. Even though Frank's love has cooled, Beth still loves him and wants him back, or at least does not want him to marry a girl with a past such as Edith's. But shall she tell Frank what she has learned? Or let him lie in the bed he has made? While a good many favored fighting for the man you love, most of the letters urged her to keep Edith's secret both as a matter of honesty and because if she did tell Frank, he probably would turn against Beth and champion Edith. Here is a prize-winning reply.

First Prize—$15

DEAR BETH PARMLEY:

It is hard to give up one who seems to be more to us than any other person could be, but it would be even harder to live with that loved one if he had a longing in his heart for another woman.

Not one of us is wise enough to plan for another. Frank is old enough and has brains enough—if he will use them—to decide for himself. Anything you might say to enlighten him in regard to the character of Edith would react against you. He would most likely think you were actuated by spite, rather than love, and turn against you. His infatuation must run its course. If he learns her real character before it is too late, he will turn to you again . . . if you still want him. But why do you want a man who is so easily led astray? Surely you will find a man of steadfast character, one who is worthy of you.

Do not waste time and energy striving for something not worth having. Look about you and be ready to make new friends.

Some of us would have led happier lives, more worthwhile lives, if we could have had the helpful and sympathetic letters you will receive.

Trust Father Time . . . he works wonders.

MRS. H. P., Nebraska

Winners in the June "Are You Romantic?" Contest to appear in October issue

Honeymooners' Trial By Error

(*Continued from page 6*)

someone's help got me out in the aisle. No one noticed my fainting spell excepting a few people around us, who were glad that we were leaving. In the aisle, an usher came to help us out, and she told him to help get me into a taxi. Just conscious enough to know that something was wrong, I tried to scream out Bob's name. But only a queer mumbling sound came from my lips.

"Poor child," she said. "I must get her back to our apartment. The air is so bad in here," she complained, "no wonder the poor dear fainted."

Now we were on the street. As in a nightmare, I prayed that Bob had turned in time to see us leaving. I tried to call for help, but the woman kept drowning out my faint voice with her solicitous endearments. I was half carried into the cab where I keeled over on the seat, my head aching furiously. The woman mumbled an address and told the driver to hurry. The door slammed shut. I was dimly aware that someone jumped on the running board and shouted, "What are you doing with this girl?"

As in a dream, I recognized Bob. I tried to speak but my voice seemed to belong to another person. She said, "This is my daughter. We were attending that show when the poor child fainted and I'm taking her home. Hurry, driver!"

"Oh, no! This is my wife! You're not her mother! Get out of the way!"

I WAS conscious of a crowd around the cab. I heard the shrill sound of a police whistle. The next I knew, a policeman was helping Bob get me out of the cab. Another policeman was arresting the woman.

It seemed that she was what is known as a procuress and the police had her record. The "pin prick" I had felt had been a hypodermic needle! Her method of working was to sit next to an unaccompanied girl in a crowded movie house and administer the drugging hypodermic. Then, using the mother-daughter pretext, she got her victim into a taxi and took her to a place where she was drugged still further—to awaken hours later, a well-guarded prisoner, in a house of vice.

All this Bob told me, holding me safely in his arms. He said some instinct had made him turn around in time to see me being led from the theatre. Thankfully, we returned to our home town the next day.

That was our last quarrel. I was so glad to be safe with him, and he was so glad to have me, that we put up with *everything* from each other. And soon we found there was *nothing* to put up with! Once we gave up wanting our own way in everything, why, there was nothing to quarrel about! In fact, that incident in the theatre had made me afraid of having my own way! The lesson that taught me this was of course terribly drastic, but we are both glad that it ended as a "lesson" instead of a horrible tragedy.

WE PAY TEN DOLLARS EACH FOR TRUE LETTERS. WHY NOT WRITE YOURS TODAY?

NO OTHER NAPKIN can offer you these 3 exclusive Kotex* features

1
CAN'T CHAFE

Kotex sanitary napkins are Wondersoft. Sides are cushioned with downy cotton to prevent chafing, to assure lasting comfort. Sides only are cushioned — the center surface is free to absorb.

2
CAN'T FAIL

Kotex sanitary napkins absorb many times their own weight in moisture! A special "Equalizer" center prevents twisting and roping, guides moisture evenly the length of the pad.

3
CAN'T SHOW

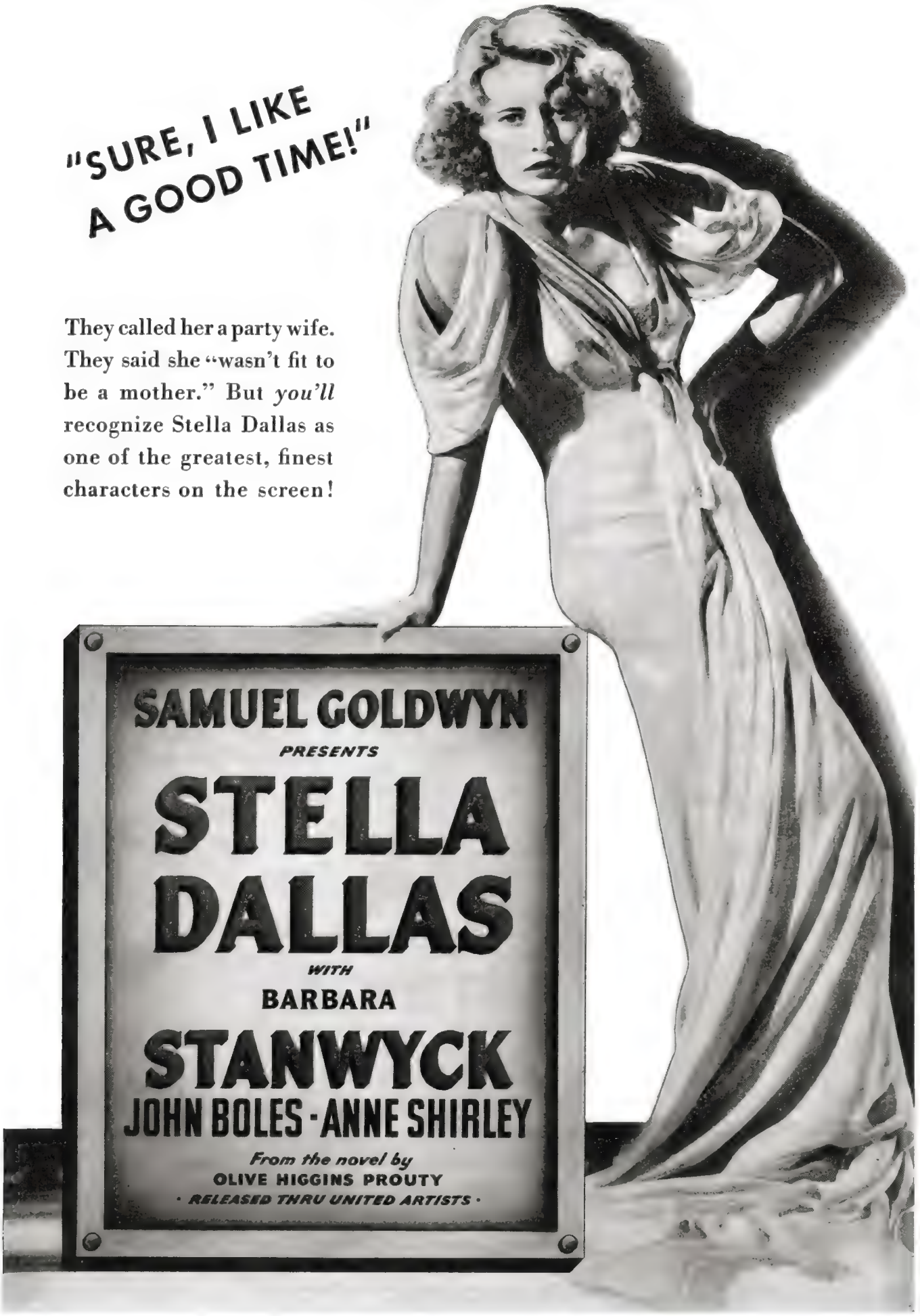
The rounded ends of Kotex sanitary napkins are flattened and tapered to provide absolute invisibility. Even the closest-fitting gown reveals no telltale lines.

NOW 3 TYPES OF KOTEX ALL AT THE SAME LOW PRICE

Regular, Junior and Super — for different women, different days.

*Trade Marks Reg. U. S. Patent Office

*WONDERSOFT KOTEX SANITARY NAPKINS made from Cellucotton (not cotton)


"SURE, I LIKE A GOOD TIME!"
They called her a party wife. They said she "wasn't fit to be a mother." But *you'll* recognize Stella Dallas as one of the greatest, finest characters on the screen!
SAMUEL GOLDWYN
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STELLA DALLAS
WITH
BARBARA
STANWYCK
JOHN BOLES · ANNE SHIRLEY
From the novel by
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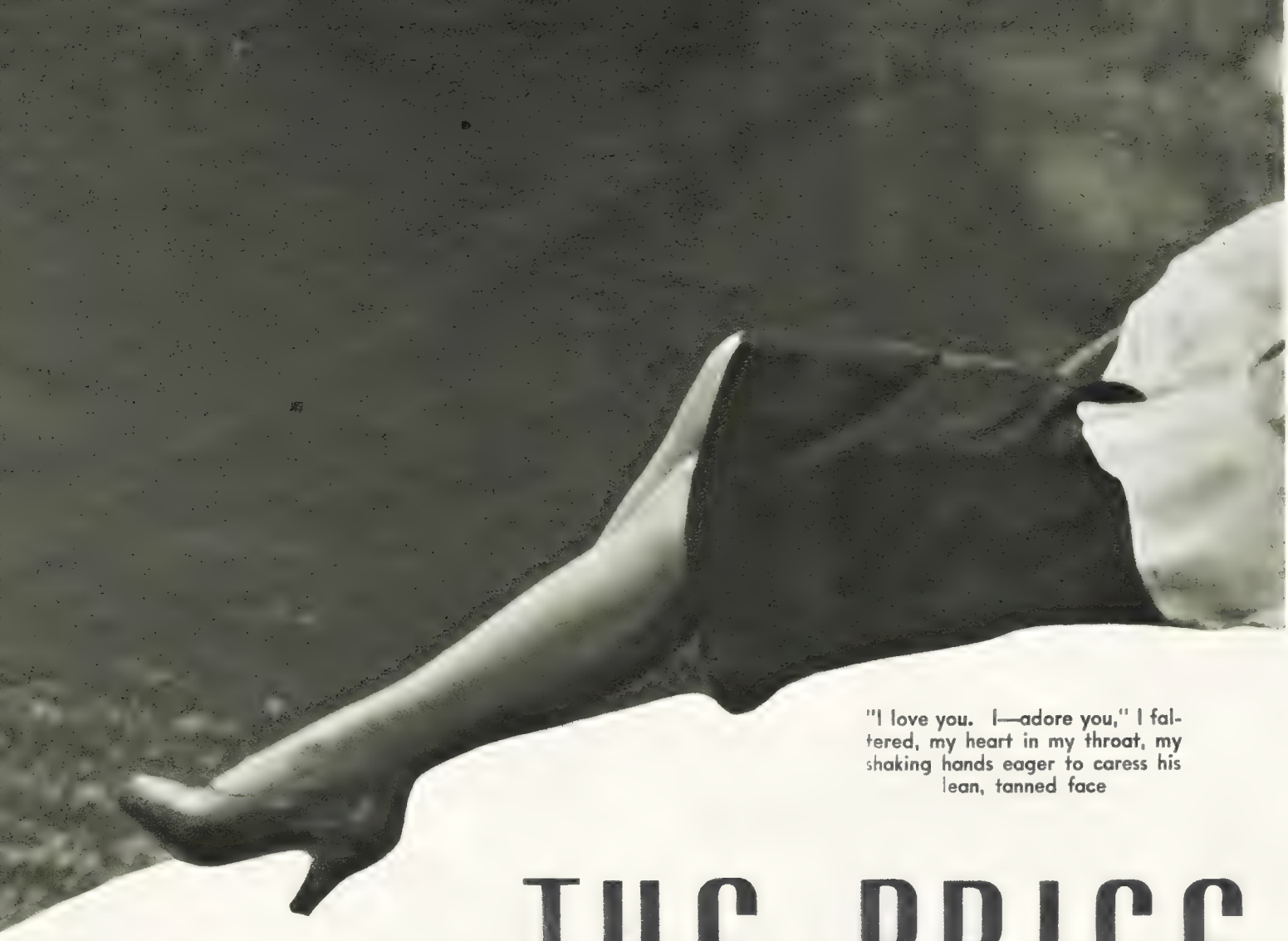
Screen Sweethearts! Sonja Henie, with hair as fair as sunlight, eyes blue as summer skies, and two bewitching dimples, poses with tall, dark, and handsome Tyrone Power in a close-up from their new Twentieth Century-Fox romantic film: *Thin Ice*



"I love you. I—adore you," I faltered, my heart in my throat, my shaking hands eager to caress his lean, tanned face

THE PRICE

MY MOTHER named me Camilla—Heaven knows why. Sounds like a name belonging to a sweet, sheltered, gold and white girl, doesn't it? The kind of girl I always wanted to be and never was. I was born in a cheap furnished room in a broken down boarding house out West, my mother told me. A doctor took care of her for nothing. Father was finishing up the job of wrecked health and an infected lung at a corner saloon. There were more saloons than stores in that town, my mother said. I've kind of pictured that scene . . . how my mother must have looked once more around that room with the plaster peeling off the walls and then decided to name me Camilla because all her life she had hungered after beauty—and hadn't got much. I guess she must have stared down at the tiny wrinkled face of her first baby and prayed God with the dreadful earnestness of a plain woman that her girl child would be lovely.

I never knew my father at all—and I'm glad. I should have hated him, and I've hated too many people in my life. I'm glad I was spared that, anyway—hating my own father.

They started to write my story way back that far. The drunkard who was my father. The loving, tired, gallant woman who was Mom. The little town she came back to, at last, with her two babies—Billy and me. She came back without a dollar in the world and no way to earn much of a living. Only Grandmother's little house was left to her, and over that house hung the shadow of a big mortgage and no matter how much sewing Mom took in, she never could pay that off.

They've called me a lot of names in my time. "Cam's a *modern* girl!" the men in my office say with a certain kind of smile and a certain lift to the eyebrows. The pattern of my life has changed a lot. I've been an honest, warm-hearted little tomboy of a girl. I've been an ambitious, eager sixteen-year-old, wanting the world, willing to fight for it. I've been a dreamy, reckless young thing, pinning all my hopes, gambling my life and my love and my soul on a boy who was just—a boy, I suppose. Better looking than most—gayer than most—that boy, to me, meant at once everything good and everything bad, because that was the way I loved him. And yet I never really changed at all. At the end as at the beginning, there were just two people who pulled the strings that made the life of Camilla Thorpe. I always called myself Thorpe. And those two were Billy and Mom.

BACK in that little town, in that little house with the tiny yard out front and the pretty garden in back, I was the happiest kid who ever lived and Billy was just a delicate, blue-eyed little brother with a fuzz of light hair that ruffled up all over his round head. Even then there were shadows that I—a defiant seven-year-old—saw and fought and feared. That day, for instance, in a country school when a hateful little boy just my age yelled, "Cam hasn't got a father! Yah, yah! Cam never *had* a father!"

I can even remember his name, Eddy Green. And I can remember the vaguely insulted feeling I got without knowing why and the awful fight we had, and then the way I ran home to Mom and boasted proudly that I had knocked Eddy's front tooth out. That's the kind of little girl I was. Thin and wiry and as dark as Billy was fair, the kind of girl who always played with boys and hated dolls.

"You had a father, Cam," Mom said shakily. "He's—dead. Don't you ever let them say any different!"

That was all she said then—that our father was dead—but the folks in her home town weren't so kind. They let me know, as young as that, that he was a drifter and a drunkard and a bum. The story ran that my mother had trailed him from one town to another, had prayed over him and starved with him, and that he had drawn his last tortured breath in her arms.

Little did I dream that my lover's kiss—the kiss that brought ecstatic joy—was like the kiss of Judas

OF MY SIN

There's something sort of big in that kind of loyalty, isn't there? Something pretty generous and staunch and sweet? The town folks said that Ruby Bland was a fool, always had been even before she went off with Thorpe, and always would be.

People weren't nice to her. They were pretty mean. Even at seven, I felt it, and later on, when I remembered certain little scenes and pictures—why, I sort of thought them over and put the pieces together. I got to know that look of pain which would twist her face whenever people said that Billy and I didn't look a bit alike, one so blond and the other so dark, and neither one of us looked like the Blands. Whom *did* we look like? That kind of remark with the running implication underneath: maybe you were married out West—maybe you weren't. Who knows?

Just the same, life in that little town is the brightest spot I have to look back to. Clean air, sun, and our own little house. At eight, I knew it was ending, knew that something was terribly wrong with Mom. They put a "For Sale" sign on the house and more than once I found her crying. I'd seen Mom so tired that she went to sleep over that battered old sewing machine of hers. I'd never seen her cry. She made a joke out of sewing for a living and being poor. She never turned either to Billy or me without that valiant, loving little grin twisting her lips. Is that a funny word to use? It's true. All my life, I've thought of Mom going down through the years, taking every knock Fate handed her, and that was plenty, with her eyes very bright, very dark—with that funny, twisted, brave little grin on her mouth. That was Mom.

When she cried, it was like the comfortable, sweet earth crumbling under my feet.

It wasn't awfully long before I connected Mom's nervous, helpless, twisting fingers and her tears with the "For Sale" sign; with the young, pretty looking woman—a stranger to us—who kept coming to call. She always brought me a doll and Billy candy when she came, and at first I liked her; the way kids always like someone who's pretty. I liked to look at her flushed sweet face under her big hat and touch the bright printed flowers on her dress.

I liked her until that day I sneaked into the dark hall to listen to her talk to Mom. That was the day my childhood ended.

"You must face facts, Mrs. Thorpe," the pretty woman was saying gently. "As long as you could live in this house with your children, you could manage to support them. But you're losing the house. The mortgage was impossible from the start. You have no way of earning a living here. There's not much to do in a little town like this one. So you're going to the city, you say. Without friends, without any—any particular skill, without money, how do you possibly think that you can support yourself and your little girl and little boy? Please! I'm not trying to be cruel. But I—I'll never have a child. You know that. And I love little Cam. I'll give her everything. A nice home, college. Tom and I will adopt her legally."

EVERY word of this speech was repeated to me so many times through my childhood that I still know it by heart. And I can remember, as plainly as if I were hearing it today, the sound of Mom's hoarse, broken sobbing. And then her muffled, "I can't—give her up. I can't! I can't—separate them kids."

"I know. It sounds hard. But just think of their good. I'm sure that some nice family in the country would take Billy. . ."

I didn't listen to any more of that. I couldn't stand it. Blind with tears, I rushed out of the house. Billy was running up and down the street with his little red wagon. I ran to him and grabbed him up in my arms. He wriggled (*Continued on page 68*

SHOTGUN WEDDING

"A fine mother you are!" I heard my father roar at Mother. "Why the devil don't you check up on her?"

Scared to death and trembling with apprehension, I decided it was wisest to confront them and brazen it out

The Story Thus Far:

"You're your father all over again," said Mother when I was little. I wasn't proud of it. I knew he drank heavily and squandered money on a woman over in Hunky Town—Kathleen Conover, who had married a laborer called Timini. As long as I could remember, Daddy's affair with her had been the gossip of our town.

Mother endured this because she still loved Daddy dearly. But as I grew older, I determined never to marry and risk such misery for myself.

One day when I was about twelve I roller skated with some girls in Hunky Town. A group of boys molested us. One, who seemed a decent kid despite his toughness, began to tease me, but a flashily dressed woman made him stop. She addressed him as Spike McClure. When she inquired my name, I asked her who wanted to know. "I do!" she snapped, "Mrs. Timini!" Thus I met my father's "loose woman."

At sixteen I fell in love with Peyton James, son of a local automobile dealer, but refused to marry him because of my aversion to marriage. Peyton's father sent him to college to break up our romance, but he kept coming home week-ends to see me. Our families didn't know. Cold weather finally drove us to a rooming house in Hunky Town for a secret meeting. In its dingy privacy we yielded for the first time to the demands of our thwarted love

Who was to blame for those secret meetings that shoved

"I saw her, I tell you! With a man!" Father was insisting. "What are you talking about, Daddy?" I asked innocently

"I'm talking about you," he said, turning on me fiercely. "Since when have you been sneaking out alone nights—"

Immediately I felt cheated and unhappy; was this the consummation of our glorious romance? I felt that Peyton shared my disillusion. "We'll be married," he insisted. "Everything will be all right then."

As we left the house and got into Peyton's car, another couple came out of an adjoining tavern. In a flash I realized it was my father—and Kathleen Conover Timini—and they were staring at me.

The Story Continues:

I SAT there, stunned, and saw my father's face stiffen as he recognized me, and Kathleen's sharp eyes narrow. Suddenly some sixth sense quickened in me, and I jogged Peyton's elbow.

"I think that's my father. Quick, step on the gas!"

"Your dad?" he gasped. "But I—how could your dad be here—" Then he seemed to remember. He must have heard, as all the town had through the years, that my father spent a great deal of his time in Hunky Town.

Without saying another word, Peyton slammed the car into gear. I felt a jerk and then we roared away, even as the two people on the sidewalk were coming closer to the curb where we had been parked.

I was breathing fast, as if I had run away on foot, instead of in the car. "Get me home quickly, Peyton! I'll sneak in the back way and swear I haven't been out all morning. He never comes home on Saturday nights. I—I think I can make Mother believe I was in my own room. She goes to bed so early, she hardly ever knows when I come in."

We said a hasty good-bye in front of my house. "I'll come back next week, as usual. Arline," he said. "Saturday afternoon."

"But we're not going to Hunky Town any more," I told him.

He kissed me quickly. "Good-bye, sweetheart. Don't—don't worry too much."

"Good-bye." But I was already worrying as I walked around the house to the back. What if Daddy and Kathy could not be bamboozled and were certain the girl they'd seen in the car was really I?

Resentfully I thought, "As if he's any better himself!" And then I blushed for my own sudden, new hardness.

There was no one in the kitchen as I came in. Thankfully, I slipped into my room. I took off my shoes and dress quickly, and dived into bed. I wanted to mess it up so that I could convincingly insist I had slept in it all night.

Under my haste and scheming, the sick feeling of disappointment still persisted. The love that people always said brought lovers closer together had only somehow distorted the beautiful emotions I had had about Peyton.

To my own surprise, although I tossed back and forth for a while, I really did sleep. I must have been asleep when Mother peered in, around noon. And I had only newly awakened when Father's angry voice sounded through the house.

"A fine mother you are!" I heard him roar. "Why the devil don't you check up on her? Do you know where she was last night? Do you? Do you?"

Scared to death and trembling with apprehension, I decided it was wisest to confront them and brazen it out. I struggled into my bathrobe and slippers. In the hallway I found Father holding Mother roughly by the arms. She was gaping at him in

their boy and girl romance into the paths society calls wanton?

total astonishment. She didn't know what it was all about.

He shook her violently. "I saw her, I tell you!" he was insisting. "Coming out of Kresjecki's rooming house! With a man! It was early this morning."

"What are you talking about, Daddy?" I asked mildly, steeling my eyes to meet his innocently.

"I'm talking about you!" He dropped his hands from Mother's shoulders and turned to me furiously. "Since when have you been sneaking out alone nights—" His face was brick red. His lips were blown out with anger, and he choked on his own words.

"I don't know what you're talking about, Daddy," I said, still with that careful innocence in my tone. But behind my guileless eyes, my brain was working at a rapid clip. He and Kathleen had been too far away from the car to be absolutely *positive* that I was the girl in the car. Even if they'd gone back and asked that fat Hungarian landlady—she didn't know my real name, or Peyton's.

But the car. That long, cream colored roadster. The whole town knew that was Peyton James' car. Well, what of it? He might be certain the boy had been Peyton—but the girl could be any cheap little floozy in Hunky Town.

I broke away from him and squared my shoulders, my thoughts pouring new confidence into me. I said again, in a good imitation of puzzled wonder, "What are you shouting about, Daddy?"

His big hand clenched. "Cut out that acting, Arline! I wasn't born yesterday. I've seen too many smart little chits like you. You were down there in Hunky Town last night, and that James kid was with you. You stayed at Kresjecki's rooming house."

"I think you're crazy!" I said with conviction. "I stayed in my own room last night like I do every night. For goodness sake, Daddy!" Then I opened my eyes wide. "Did you think I'd eloped or something? Is that what it is?"

He made vehement, bottled-up sounds of rage. My mother's sad, tired eyes were on me. But I was convincing her. I felt sure of that. I turned to her, my lips quivering. "Mother, do you know what's the matter with him? What does he think I've done?"

I put out my hands and Mother started to take them, but Daddy came between us wrathfully. "You can pull the wool over your mother's eyes, miss, but not over mine. Come on, now. You know you were down there with that James boy! I asked Kresjecki's wife. She said you two had rented her rooms for a week. Sure, and cleared out the next morning. She's a respectable woman. She doesn't like that kind of business." His cold eye held mine. "Suppose I brought her here to see whether or not you're the same girl?"

I was passionately headstrong, enough like him to brazen my way out of this mess. But I was young, too. Only sixteen. And when he said he'd bring that woman here to identify me, I couldn't help the startled exclamation and the sudden rigidity of fear which overcame me.

Daddy jumped on me triumphantly. His smile was ugly. "That damned James boy! He took you there, eh? He's older. He's a man. He should have known better. By God, if he thinks he can trifle with my daughter—"

He tightened his belt. For the first time I realized that Daddy was a huge and powerful man. His associations in Hunky Town had lent him a tough recklessness which I had never noticed before.

"What are you going to do?" Mother squeaked.

"I'm going to drag that sneaking little wise-guy around this town by the seat of his pants. I'll wipe the streets up with him. I'll knock the living lights out of him. He needs a good licking, the scum! And after that, there's going to be a wedding." Daddy looked me squarely in the eye. "You liked him well enough to—to—stay with him, miss. You'll like him enough to marry him!"

In a terrified flash I seemed to see the faces of girls I'd always known, curled up in scorn. I saw them slyly laughing behind their hands at me. I heard the mean whispers, "Had to get married. Ruined, you know. Shotgun wedding!" And my chest was filled with a huge and painful swelling. No, no. I couldn't bear that. I couldn't.

I threw myself in Daddy's way. "You're wrong, don't you see? You're wrong! I wasn't there. I—I hardly know Peyton James! He's been away at school. It couldn't have been he . . . they don't let them go away for week-ends. Daddy, Daddy, please don't do anything terrible! You'll have the whole town laughing at us." Now I was sobbing. My tears were genuine enough. I wanted to die with mortification. "They've had so much to laugh at me for, up to now." I looked at him pitifully. My mouth quivered. "They—they always talked about you. And I—I had to be extra careful, so they'd see I—I wasn't like a—like a Hunky Town girl. And now you want to rush around broadcasting it all over town that I let Peyton—that I—that we—"

My shoulders shook, my whole body was melting in misery. Through the sobs I cried, "Daddy, Daddy, I didn't! You're wrong. You couldn't have seen me! I was home in bed! Oh, Mother, tell him! Tell him that you saw me yourself."

Mother opened and closed her mouth like a fish. Her eyes were wide and glassy. She didn't seem to realize what I wanted her to say.

"Mother, you know you saw me! Last night—when you—asked me to get up and get you your headache powders."

"You're asking her to lie for you!" Father shouted. "Damn it, don't I see what's going on? Take your hands off me. I'm going out to beat that snivelling little son of a gun to a pulp. I'll tear him apart! I'll—"

I stood up very straight. I made a last superhuman effort to persuade Daddy that he was horribly wrong. I said quietly, "All right, go on. The whole town will say you were drunk again. They'll say I've been carrying on with all the boys, when it's not true. It's not true, do you hear? I've been as good as—as good as Mother! But they'll say I was loose, and you just picked out Peyton as a scapegoat. That's what they always say." I turned my back to him. "Go on, give this town more gossip to spread around about us. Give them something else to laugh at! It isn't enough that Mother and I have tried to

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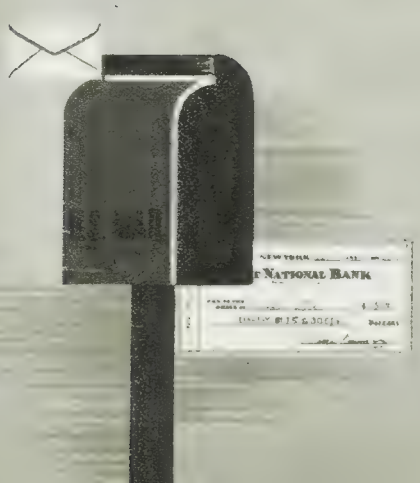


This magazine is yours. We want you to enjoy it more and more each month. Therefore, we are asking for a frank criticism of this issue of MODERN ROMANCES.

When you have finished reading the magazine, turn back to the table of contents and write down the titles of the stories that appealed to you most. Then tell why you liked them especially well. If there was a story you did not like, do not hesitate to say so, but tell why. With this help from you we will be able to choose out of the hundreds of true life stories that come to us, exactly the type of stories you like to find in MODERN ROMANCES.

A first prize of fifteen dollars, a second prize of ten, and five five-dollar prizes will be awarded for the most helpful letters of criticism received before September 1st. Contributions will not be returned. The names of prize winners will be announced in MODERN ROMANCES as soon as possible after the awarding of the prizes. Make your list, write your comments. Address your letter to the Contest Editor, MODERN ROMANCES, 149 Madison Avenue, New York City.

"I made a mistake when I was your age. I kept on making mistakes—but you'll be sorry if you do the same thing, kid!"

keep our chin up to the world and make believe we were happy and didn't know about—about your woman!" I spat the words at him, wheeling to face him again. My eyes were flashing, as dangerous and as furious as his own. "It's because there's so much evil and low living in you that you dare—yes, *dare* to accuse me of such a thing. And it's not true. It's not true! It's not, it's not!"

"Stop that shrieking!" snarled Daddy.

"No, I won't stop it. Why should I? You want to go out and race around advertising the fact that you think your daughter is no good. All right, I'll advertise a few things myself. You have no proof! You're wrong, hear me? Dead wrong. And what were you doing down in Hunky Town yourself to see me there? Mother, ask him that."

But Mother could only tremble, her face paper white, her huge, dead eyes going first to me and then to him.

"You can't bamboozle me, Arline," Daddy snarled. "You were there. You spent the night with that James kid."

"I spent the night right here in my own room."

"Like hell you did!"

But in the end he stamped into the bedroom and slammed the door. I knew he'd get drunk. Drunker than usual. And I prayed passionately that he'd drink himself into a stupor and not be able to come out, roaring, looking for me or for Peyton.

BUT meanwhile, I knew I'd have to do something. Daddy was not convinced. I had staved off the reckoning hour, but I had not obliterated the possibility of its blasting my life apart. I knew him too well. He was stubborn, passionate, self-willed. He was positive he'd seen me, and he was sure the man was Peyton. Daddy had one code for his own life, but for me he had another and more rigid one. That code would demand that Peyton marry me just as soon as possible to right the wrong he had done me.

I didn't want to be thrown at Peyton's head! Remembering the sick disappointment, the inexplicable change he had undergone in my eyes from lover to fumbling small boy, I shied away more than ever from the thought of marriage.

But what could I do to force Daddy to forget the whole incident? How could I make him swallow my story?

Mother's word was no help. He knew I could twist her around my fingers. She was asking me now, "Arline, Arline, what did you do?"

Out of patience, my nerves ragged from the exhausting scene with Daddy, I said shortly, "I didn't do anything! Don't you believe me either?"

"Of course I believe you, Arline. But your father—he seemed so sure—"

"You'd better ask him what he was doing down in Hunky Town himself."

"Arline!" Her chin was quivering with the familiar quiver that presaged tears.

"Oh, Mother, please don't cry! I'm all right, and I can take care of everything. But for heaven's sake, keep him in the house all day if you—if you have to lock him in!"

"You're your father all over again," she said despairingly. "And when you set yourself against him, it's steel against steel, Arline. Don't anger him. Don't do anything—oh, I'm afraid." She took my hand. "You *are* different. My baby, my little darling, did anyone harm you? Tell Mother. . . ."

"Oh, Mother—" I pushed her away in disgust. "You're so soft and—oh—let me alone, please." Then, seeing the sad change that came over her face at this rebuff, I was instantly sorry.

I crept up into her arms, sobbing softly. "I'm sorry, Mother darling. I didn't mean to speak to you that way. Oh, I'm so upset! I'm so upset! He—right out of a clear sky, when I haven't done anything he—he accuses me—"

She patted me awkwardly. "All right, baby. My little girl. Everything will be all right. Mother will help you."

So I had convinced her, at least. I said swiftly, "I'm going out now. I—I have something to do."

I had no clear idea of what I would *(Continued on page 75)*

THE BIRTHRIGHT

He was heir to wealth and fame yet a total failure as a man—until one woman's love helped him to change his destiny

SHALL I TELL you first about the handsome monument the relatives raised over the grave of Thomas Morsden III (though heaven alone knows why they bothered to mourn, for with his death they came into the property which was rightfully theirs) or shall I tell you how I hated little Taffy Willis, who used to come to help her mother in our kitchen?

I can see her yet, with one of her mother's aprons tied around her neck, polishing glasses with small girl dignity, and ignoring me with little girl scorn. Taffy was the only child I knew who wouldn't run after me with offers of friendship in exchange for the candy and ice cream I always had money to buy, and I disliked her because of it.

"Don't you wish you could have some of my candy?" I teased one day, setting a row of chocolate creams along the edge of the table where she was working.

"No, thank you," she said distinctly. "My mamma buys me candy."

I knew Mrs. Willis didn't have money for such luxuries, and I knew by the way Taffy's blue eyes kept turning back to those chocolates that she could fairly taste their goodness. Once I saw her moisten her lips and look at them longingly, saying nothing.

"If you'll say 'Please' I'll give you some candy," I offered.

"I don't care for any, thank you," Taffy insisted adamantly.

She lied about that, I knew. She did want that candy, just as much as I wanted her to ask for it, and her refusal angered me. As she turned to set a glass in the cupboard I grabbed one of her long yellow braids and yanked it—hard.

Taffy's lips quivered and she blinked rapidly, but she didn't cry out. "You might have made me break that glass," she said reproachfully.

That gave me an idea, and when she picked up the pitcher I got to my feet, stuffed the candy back in the bag and put it in my pocket. Then I started toward the door, stumbled, and careened into Taffy.

The wet pitcher slipped from her fingers and crashed to the floor, as I had been hoping.

"Oh!" she wailed miserably. "It's broke!"

I ran out the back door as I heard Mrs. Willis coming from the dining room.

You see, my folks were rich, and I was the most spoiled brat in town.

Maybe I should mention here that our wealth came from the Ridgeway Coal Mines, and that my father had bought the property from his brother Ernest, who had little business judgment and so was glad to get the rather good price Dad offered for his unproductive ranch.

But that transaction put a strain on the family ties; for with the "discovery" of the mine Uncle Ernest came to believe Dad had known the value of the property before he bought it, and Dad justified himself with the thought that his brother never would have developed the mine had he kept the property.

I SCORNED

She leaped lightly upon a small taboret and started to kid me. "Sweet little sugar-Tommy, aren't you? Love your Rene, darling?"

Her sweetness was too much for me. I drew her gently close. The touch of her was fire to my undisciplined senses

I couldn't escape a sort of rotten feeling down inside me after I'd made Taffy break that pitcher. I tried to tell myself it served her right for being such a stuck-up little prig, but still I didn't feel right about it. So I went out to the kitchen the next time she came.

"I—I'm sorry, Taffy—about the pitcher," I managed to say.

"It's all right," Taffy said softly, but she wouldn't meet my eyes.

Her mother happened to overhear what we said. "What about the pitcher, Tommy?" she questioned.

"I guess it was my fault it got broke," I admitted slowly. After all, I wasn't used to taking blame for anything that happened, and I was finding it hard to do. But I knew I couldn't get quite right with myself, and with Taffy, unless I did. "I—I pushed her."

"Taffy didn't tell me," Mrs. Willis remarked. "She only said she dropped it."

I felt my face redden. A girl, taking the blame for something I had done!

"I'm going to buy you a chocolate soda," I said impulsively, "and I won't pull your hair any more."

TAFFY and I were good friends after that. Only now and then would she let me treat her, but she used to bring her roller skates and she and I whizzed around the many walks about our place. She was as good a skater as I, as good a hiker too.

"For a girl, you're a pretty good scout," I had to admit.

She executed a perfect circle on one skate. "You're nicer than any boy I know," she declared.

And that, coming from Taffy, was a real compliment.

Dad always gave me a generous allowance, and I threw it around freely. I liked to feel like a good fellow, liked to have the other boys pat me on the back and tell me what a swell pal I was, puffed proudly when some dainty little girl looked up into my brown eyes and whispered that I was the handsomest boy in town.

It never occurred to me that my money had anything to do with my popularity. In my supreme young egotism, I thought I *was* a pretty swell fellow, and that everybody liked me.

During my high school days I could, and did, date almost every girl in town, but only three of them, besides Taffy, rate a place in this story. I'm going to mention them here, with the labels I gave them then. Patsy—graceful—dances. Mary—athletic—horseback rides. Rene—quiet—but the first time I kissed Rene Fletcher I knew what *her* specialty was!

So it wasn't surprising that I almost lost sight of Taffy during those hectic high school days. True, I saw her now and then, but she had changed somehow. She was so grown-up, she went about her school work with such quiet dignity. Or maybe it wasn't Taffy who changed. Maybe I was so absorbed with my other interests that I no longer had time to appreciate her.

Then I went away to college. It had always been a fond dream of Dad's that some day I would take my place beside him in the mining business. Poor Dad, if he had been less indulgent he might have realized his hope, but as it was, I only took up the course in mining engineering because he suggested it, and I had to study something. College professors have queer notions like that, I discovered. A bigger allowance, a larger crowd, more freedom than a small town permits, that was my idea of college.

Home again in Galesville, I found Mary had married Ben Alten, and they were parents. Dainty little Patsy had married too, and immediately divorced her husband. Rene had a good secretarial position, and an aura of refined respectability. But it took only one date to get us back on our old relationship.

"Little angel face," I murmured, "with your demure air you could get away with murder."

She smiled, and there was a caress in her lazy voice. "Don't rub it in, darling. A man may do as he pleases, but a woman can't—not if the world knows about it."

So I helped Rene play her little game, and I went openly to Patsy's house, for she didn't care who knew what she did. And once or twice I persuaded Mary and Ben to go for a gallop with me, but they seemed so definitely changed I was soon glad to leave them behind. Domesticated, that was it. No gayety, no fire, no verve for life. It didn't occur to me that they were *living* life, while the rest of us were only chasing it.

It was fun for a time. And then I began to chafe at the possessiveness with which Rene locked her arms about my neck, to shy away from the way Patsy flaunted me before her crowd. It came to my mind suddenly that they were both angling for a part of my name, and I had no matrimonial intentions.

There were other girls in town, plenty of them. And plenty of fellows to laugh at my jokes and drink my gin. Parties, excursions, picnics, dances.

My mother had died while I was in college, my father passed suddenly from a heart attack one night while I was out on a party and could not be located.

When I came in, Holden, my man, helped me to bed and did not tell me, for I'm afraid I wasn't in a condition to understand facts then. But the next afternoon when I awoke he told me as sympathetically as he could, and by that time my father's body already lay in state in the parlor downstairs.

Too stunned to feel my grief, but humiliated over my behavior of the previous evening, I crept down the stairs and stood in the doorway.

The shades were drawn, and dim light slanted upon a long grey casket, exactly like the one that held my mother two years earlier. A girl was standing there, gazing down into it. And there were tears in her eyes. She turned when she saw me.

"Oh, I—beg your pardon."

I stepped aside to let her pass, but even in that moment I was struck by her fresh young beauty. I knew she was slender as a wand, that her hair was long, simply knotted at her neck, and honey-colored, and that her big, wet eyes were blue.

"Why—you're *Taffy!*"

She nodded. "Your father was good to us," she said simply as she slipped away.

And then I was looking down into his face—only it wasn't Dad at all. The life that had made him Dad was gone, and the cold figure at which I looked was a stranger to me. I touched his hand, the hand he used to cup over my shoulder when I was a little lad, but it wasn't Dad's hand now; it was only lifeless clay.

With a frightened sob I sank into a chair and buried my face in my hands. Even with Mother's passing I had not felt the finality of death so deeply, for Dad had been there. But now Dad was *gone*, and there was no one left. In the selfishness of my grief I think I even blamed him a little for leaving me.

My fair weather friends were little help through that period. Though Patsy never showed up at all, Rene came, bringing flowers and sweetly offering me her sympathy. But she pressed against my side so closely, when we were alone, tried so many physical ways to draw my mind from my grief, that I got the idea she was using it as an excuse to further her own interests. And so my determination not to step into anything I couldn't get out of kept me from opening my heart and letting her ease away a little of its loneliness, though I was grateful for the company she gave me.

With his characteristic intelligence Dad had fixed his business so that I could not take over the management of it until I reached the age of twenty-five, which would be almost three years. But since I was to be provided with a large monthly check, I worried little over that.

As a matter of fact, I had little interest in the business anyway, so this system suited me. Plenty of money, and still no responsibilities.

Vaguely, in those lonely days, I wondered a bit about life, felt somehow that I was missing something vital. Speculatively, I thought of turning over a new leaf, of trying to amount to something.

Then Patsy called me up, said she was giving a small party, and would I come? She made no mention of my grief, then or later, and I knew she was trying in her own way to help me forget it.

I went. And at the beginning I was having a swell time. Rene was there, of course, and was the gayest of them all. We had been dancing together, when suddenly she broke away, leaped lightly upon a small taboret, and started to kid me. "Sweet little sugar-Tommy, aren't you?" she smiled impishly. "Love your Rene, darling?"

"Course I do, baby," I replied, swung my arms around her, and we danced some more.

But suddenly, and for the first time in my life the drunken gayety of the party gave me a sense of distaste. I was sitting by the fireside, a glass in my hand, reflecting upon the general stupidness of life, when I looked up to see a tall, blond girl regarding me from the doorway.

Her hair was too yellow, her lips too red and her eyes too bright, but something about her reminded me vaguely of someone I had seen. I closed my eyes, and instantly I saw her—Taffy Willis—standing in the doorway of my own parlor. Taffy, fresh and beautiful, and—and—I couldn't express the comparison between Taffy and the girls in this crowd, but it was entirely to Taffy's credit.

The girl in the doorway smiled. A certain uneasiness swept over me. Taffy Willis? Hell, what was getting into me? Maybe the drink would help. So I drained the glass and got to my feet. Thus Florence Bagly came into my life.

IF Rene felt any jealousy toward Patsy, she had never let it show, but she did not try to mask her enmity toward Florence.

"That woman's no good," she declared. "Of course, darling, I don't want to butt into your affairs, but—"

"She's a good sport, Rene, and if we want to have a little fun together, we're going to do it. After all, neither of us has any ties."

That was a cruel shot, and I knew it, but Rene had to be put in her place now and then. I saw the look of anger that flashed across her face for an instant, but she replaced it immediately with one of contrition.

"Sorry, darling, I know I'm a cross old bear today—but let's forget it all. Put your arms around Rene and tell her she's forgiven."

So Rene said no more about Florence, though I came to realize later that she buried her jealousy deep in her heart, let it fester and grow there until she could no longer hide it, and then—

Hectically, I went on with my mad chase of life. Our big house, now that I was its only occupant, became an intolerably lonely place, so I spent as little time as possible there. Restless, dissatisfied, I drank continually, went from one party to another and from one affair to another.

I know you are disgusted by my frank revelation of my own weaknesses and feel that common sense should have told me how shallow and stupid my life was. I agree with you. I was stupid, and weak, and an utter waster. But maybe there is a little something to be said in my defense too.

Remember that I had been spoiled from babyhood, had never been crossed in the slightest thing, had always had my own way, had grown up with an exaggerated sense of my own importance, and had never learned self-reliance in the smallest detail. And now, at sea though I was with myself and life in general, I had nothing to guide me, no compass by which to chart my course.

During this time I had not seen Taffy Willis again, for, even though I thought of her fresh beauty often, something kept me away from her. Maybe it was some innate sense of decency—more than likely it was a fear of the possibility of her scorn. For instinctively I felt that Taffy would disapprove of me.

But one evening Holden came to me. "Begging your pardon, sir, but would you very much mind dining uptown tonight? Mrs. Willis is suddenly ill."

"Mrs. Willis ill? Why, I never heard of her having a sick day."

"She's having one now, sir."

So I went out to the kitchen to see what was wrong, for I was downright fond of Mrs. Willis. She always oversaw everything that went on in my house, never forgot my favorite dishes nor chafed at the irregularity of my hours, and always managed her own little house too, going home each night. I knew that she had come into my mother's employ shortly after the death of her husband, but that she had insisted upon maintaining a home of her own for Taffy's sake.

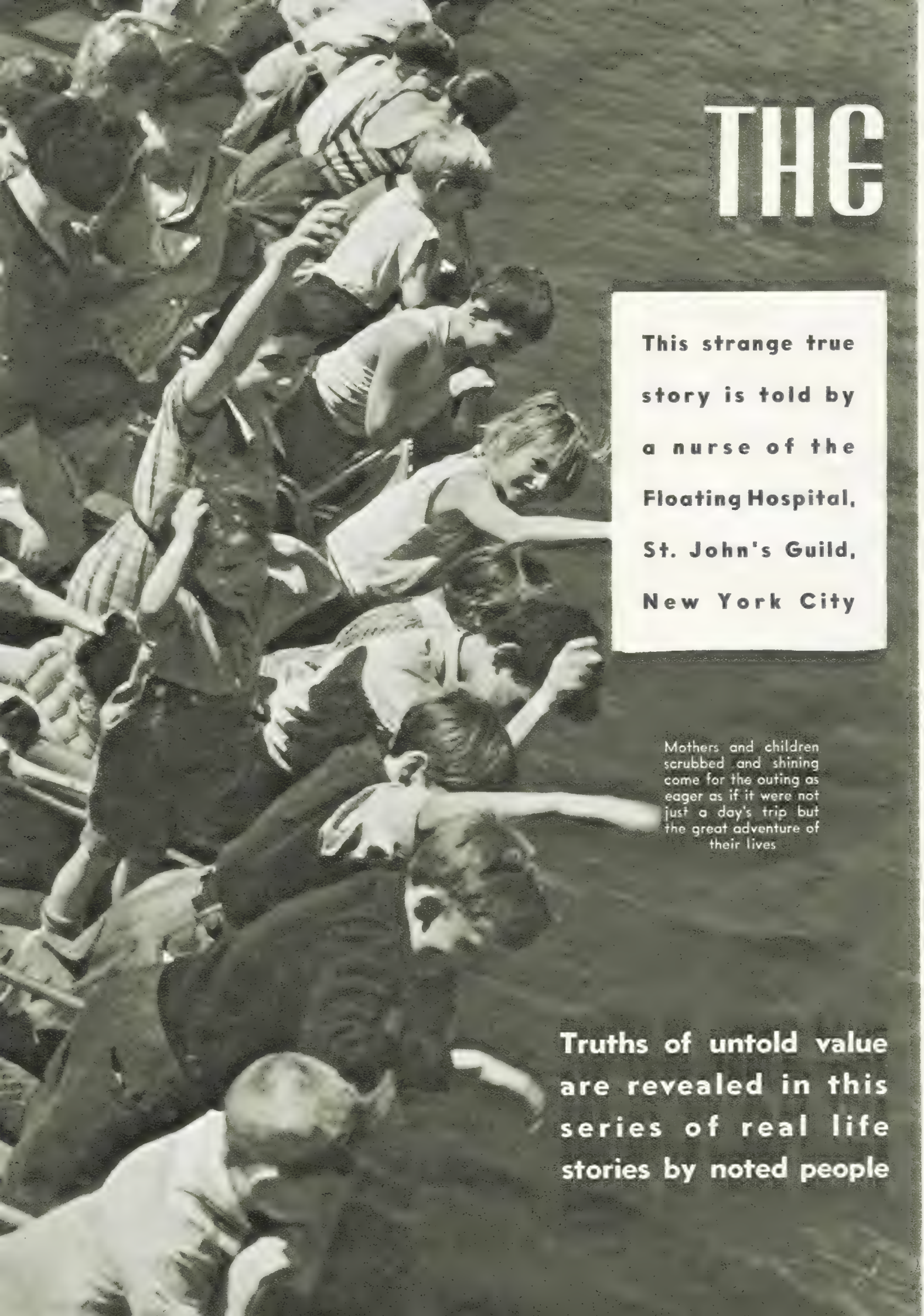
Mrs. Willis was clutching her side and moaning when I reached her.

"It's only a stomach attack," she said gamely.

"You're really sick!" I exclaimed, as I looked at the greenish whiteness of her face. "I'm going to take you to the hospital."

"Oh, no!" she protested. "It's nothing serious. I'll be all right soon. And besides—I couldn't—" (*Continued on page 80*)

Coldly I drew back. "Stop it!" I ordered. "There never was any question of marriage between us — and there isn't now."



THE

This strange true story is told by a nurse of the Floating Hospital, St. John's Guild, New York City

Mothers and children scrubbed and shining come for the outing as eager as if it were not just a day's trip but the great adventure of their lives

Truths of untold value are revealed in this series of real life stories by noted people

MARCH OF LIFE

LOOK carefully over New York harbor on a summer morning and you will see, starting from the pier at the foot of Market Street, a queer looking boat. It's large and white and stubby, and instead of moving under its own power, it is pulled along by a tug.

There are no engines on that boat, because it is not built for travel, only for floating; because every available inch of space on it is used for recreational purposes. It is the Floating Hospital run by St. John's Guild—strictly speaking not a hospital at all, but *a place where people go in order not to get sick.*

The Floating Hospital has been operating for seventy years now, though the original barge which went by that name was nothing like the large up-to-date new ship we launched two years ago. Its purpose is to give the undernourished, sickly children of the New York slums, and their work-worn mothers, a chance to relax and rest; a chance to breathe into starved lungs the fresh salt air, which, together with sunlight, is the best protection in the world against summer diseases.

Each morning during the hot months, while the heavy pall of humidity and dust hangs over the harbor and the city, mothers and children and small babies gather in crowds on the dock. They come scrubbed and shining and eager for the outing as though it were not just a day's trip, but the great adventure of their lives. They come hours ahead of time, as though terrified that the boat might sail without them, clutching the precious free tickets of admission given to them by one of the numerous welfare agencies that coöperate with us.

Occasionally, there is a note accompanying the tickets. "We think," an agency will write, "that little Jane Smith ought to go on more than one trip or she'll come down with summer grip." Or, "Sammy Cohen has just had pneumonia. It is advisable to take him on board several days running so he can recuperate."

We encourage such notes. At other times, it is the doctors on board who discover weakness and ill health when our young passengers, after a shower and scrubbing, are examined in the clinic. Bad teeth, bad tonsils, skin eruptions, rickets are some of the most frequent ailments we help to fight. It is not unusual for a child taken aboard for a day's outing to find his way to our Seaside Hospital, on Staten Island, to be treated for some acute condition which otherwise would remain unremedied.

We never know, as the boat pulls away from the pier at nine each morning, what problems and misery we will unearth among our thousand or more young passengers in the course of the day; whom we will be called upon to help, and in what way; what strange life stories we will stumble upon. . . .

Many of these stories are fascinating and poignant, but since there is room here to tell only one, I am choosing that of little Midge O'Connor, because it is like no other story I have ever heard.

When we first saw Midge she was eleven months old and she looked about four months—a tiny, waxlike wraith of a baby with solemn blue eyes. She was being carried flat on a pillow—one of those old-fashioned baby pillows which once in a while you still see immigrants use. But it wasn't the pillow which made her stand out in the long procession of mothers and children waiting to get on board. It was the fact that she was the only one of all the children that was being carried by a man.

Now we've had to make one ruling about the Floating Hospital, a ruling imposed by necessity, since we have only one boat and the slum children eager to get on it are so many. We allow no men passengers. The ship is for mothers, and children under twelve. We dare not relax this ruling or we'd be swamped.

The resident physician, who stands at the gangplank and quickly examines the children for signs of infectious illness as, one by one, they come aboard, reluctantly stopped the tall young man and the child. "I'm sorry," she said. "But you can't go on. It's against the rules. This baby should be brought some other day by its mother."

It was one of those stifling, sticky July mornings still heavy with last night's heat, and the crowd which had turned out was unusually large. The resident physician was very busy. But the tall young man would not leave the line. "Please," he said. "Please do something. My little Midge hasn't any mother. Only me."

In his eyes, blue like the baby's, was stark tragedy. Tragedy, too, in the lean sharpened lines of his boyish face under the flaming red hair. His mouth, that must once have been quick to Irish laughter, was sober with pain. And he kept saying, "Please. You can't send my little Midge away."

We do not like to turn any child away, especially an infant. But rules are rules. "Are you sure," the physician asked patiently, "that you could not arrange for some friend, some neighbor to bring the baby another day?"

The boy shook his head. "I don't know the neighbors. And I have no women friends."

It was at that moment that the Italian girl spoke up. She was next in line behind him, and with her were four eager, boisterous sloe-eyed youngsters, all of them clean and scrubbed, all darkly beautiful in spite of the pinched, drained look which marks tenement children.

She put an impulsive hand on the boy's arm. "Excuse me but—I couldn't help hearing. Look, maybe you'd let your baby come with us. She's such a quiet little thing. She'd be no trouble."

Her voice was low, gentle. And her face, as she bent eagerly over the tiny listless baby on the pillow, was like a childish madonna's. She looked young enough to be yearning over dolls instead of children. Yet she was obviously the "adult" in charge of her own brood.

For a moment Patrick O'Connor was so startled he couldn't speak. A slow flood of color mounted to the roots of his flaming hair, as if he had forgotten how to talk with girls. At last he said, "You're Clelia Petrini, aren't you? Your old man runs the fish store on Bleecker Street, and I buy vegetables off your ma's pushcart once in a while."

She nodded. "And you're the carpenter that's moved into the basement around the corner. I saw your baby the day you moved. I've sort of wondered. My kid brothers and

sisters always yelled when they were little, but your baby never cries. I've never seen a baby that quiet."

By that time the four small Petrinis had passed the doctor's inspection and were ready to go on board. They were clamoring for their sister. Clelia said, "Look, I've got to go. But honest, you needn't be afraid. I know all about babies. I've helped my mother bring up those four."

Patrick started doubtfully, "No one's ever helped me take care of Midge before. Why should you—" Something in the girl's gentle face must have reassured him. "I guess I shouldn't be asking you why. I guess I should be thanking you. All right then, take her. I'll be waiting here when the ship docks tonight."

Clelia had been right when she said she knew all about babies. While her own little brothers and sisters played games on deck, laughed through a showing of a kiddy movie, and gobbled a lunch of sandwiches and milk, she went to the day nursery with Midge. She bathed her and prepared a nursing formula. Without being urged, she asked if she could take her to the clinic.

"There's something wrong," she told the attendant nurse. "I guess a man wouldn't notice, but I can tell. She's awfully tiny for eleven months. And she won't crawl—won't even sit up."

It did not take the clinic doctor long to see how very wrong things were. Midge, placid and oddly resigned on her pillow, was as motionless as a big doll. It wasn't that she did not want to sit up. She couldn't; nor could she raise her head or move her arms and legs.

"Extreme malnutrition," the doctor said at once. "That baby is slowly starving to death. Her bones are so soft, there's nothing for the little muscles to hold on to. It's a wonder she's alive at all."

Clelia said passionately, "She's got to live! Her father—I think he'll die too if anything happens to her!" And later, when we talked to Patrick O'Connor, we knew she was right. With quick instinctive sympathy this girl had sensed the fierce devotion he had for his child.

What she did not know, what we could not suspect, was that this very devotion had nearly killed baby Midge; devotion and well-meaning effort, but also total ignorance, inexperience about everything that had to do with the care of an infant.

Young Clelia was terribly worried. "Maybe I should have been a better neighbor. Four months ago, when they first moved into our street, I thought it was queer, the baby always in the carpenter shop and never a woman around. I thought it was queer and I wanted to drop in and see if there wasn't something I could do. But I didn't dare. Patrick O'Connor is the kind who keeps to himself. I was afraid he'd be mad."

Gently the doctor assured her that four months ago most of the damage had already been done. "But if we send the baby to Seaside Hospital for the rest of the summer, maybe we can save her. We'll have to take X-rays first. And, of course, we shall have to see the father."

So the very next day, Patrick O'Connor showed up at the admission office. Clelia Petrini was with him. It was as if she had adopted Patrick and Midge. Some women are like that. The mother instinct in them is so strong you can't keep them away from anything small and helpless that might need them, no matter how much extra work and trouble it is.

Patrick's tragic blue eyes were puzzled. "I don't understand," he kept saying over and over. "I don't understand why anything should be wrong. I thought I was taking care of Midge right. I wash her clothes, keep her clean, and feed her and . . ."

"What do you feed your baby?" asked the doctor in charge.

"Evaporated milk. Every time I eat, I give her a bottle."

"What additional foods do you give her?" queried the doctor.

"Oh, nothing else. I thought babies couldn't digest anything else!" Patrick was amazed to learn that they could and should.

THE doctor and Celia exchanged a horrified glance. A bottle of evaporated milk three times a day, with no supplementing foods, for a child nearly a year old! No wonder she was slowly starving!

But someone had once told Patrick O'Connor that babies live on milk, and he had been sure he'd been doing the right thing. Even now, he couldn't quite figure it out. "I thought I was doing O. K., just like I promised my Margaret I would—"

Margaret—big Midge, he called her—had been his wife. She had died in the ward when the baby was a week old, according to the case history Patrick was giving. And it had not been up

"You can't go on," said the resident physician. "Only mothers and children."

Grief lined Patrick's face, as he turned away with, "Little Midge has only me."

"Let your baby come with us," offered Clelia, next in line with an eager brood

to the overworked hospital authorities to check up on the heart-broken young father's ability to care for his tiny daughter, so long as he said he wanted her.

"They did ask me if I wanted to put Midge in an orphanage or give her out for adoption. My Margaret's baby! I said I'd rather be struck dead than do that. And a foster home costs money—money I didn't have. I took my Midge and moved to another neighborhood. I was afraid they'd get after me and take her away—"

"But haven't you any relatives?" Clelia asked, "anyone who could—"

He shook his head. "I have no one. I've never had. Margaret was the same. That's why being married and having a home was so wonderful to us. We meant to be so happy, big Midge and the baby and I—" He was as near to tears as a strong six-footer can be.

The doctor, a wise and sympathetic woman, said gently, "I don't want to urge you. But—would it help if you told me the whole story?"

Patrick O'Connor flushed and for a moment self-consciousness made him speechless. Then he said, "I don't know that there is much to tell. I guess you've heard a dozen stories like mine. And you're busy—"

But the eternity of loneliness, longing, and misery which the past eleven months must have been to him, all that time when he had spoken to no one, were too much. "I guess I'll have to tell someone or bust. Only you promise you won't take the baby away and put her in a home or up for adoption? You promise?"

The doctor assured him neither the Floating Hospital nor Seaside would do such a thing; that we were concerned only with making his baby well again. He relaxed a little.

"All right," he said. "I believe you." He reached for his pipe, lighted it, took a quick puff and held it in his hand. Clelia, her eyes very large and soft, watched him. She leaned forward, tense, as if the story he had to tell was, to her, terribly important.

"I never knew my parents," Patrick began. "They died of the flu in that bad epidemic during the War. That was twenty years ago. I was two years old and my mother's sister took me to live with her. She and her husband lived in Shantytown in Brooklyn. Maybe you don't know it, but it's still there, along the waterfront. Some of the toughest gangsters in town hang out there.

"My aunt meant well, but she had seven children of her own, and a drunk for a husband. So when I was four she gave up trying to raise an extra kid. She put me in an orphanage, and I've never seen her since; though once, when I was about ten, I got a letter from her. She wrote she was dying too, and she told me all the things I'm telling you now. About who my people were, and all. Just so's I'd know, she said, when I grew up.

"The orphanage was a terrible place. Everything you did that wasn't just so, you got punished for. Sometimes punishment was learning extra verses from the Bible, and sometimes bread and water. But mostly they whipped us. And the older kids were allowed to bully the small ones and knock them around.

"Do you see why I won't let Midge be put in an orphanage? Oh, I know, people say things have changed since I was a kid. But the loneliness must be the same. Anyway, I'm taking no chances of Midge going through anything like that.

"When I was twelve I ran away. I was big for my age, and fighting the bullies had made me tough, and the grub I'd been used to made any kind of handout seem a feast. So I got by. The first year, I sold papers and shined shoes in the Bowery. Then I delivered groceries in Greenwich Village. Then I got in with a gang in Hell's Kitchen, down where the freight trains passed right through the streets, bringing food for the city to the wholesale markets.

"The gang told me about riding the freights in summer, and I chucked my job and was off. I saw most of the country. For two years, I bummed around, doing odd jobs when I had to earn a little cash.

"THE year I was seventeen things were so bad in the whole country even riding freights wasn't easy any more. Too many people doing it. Too many hungry men fighting for the little odd jobs. I got sick of it. A train I was in rolled into the New York Central freight yards. I jumped off and was back on the town.

"I had no trade and no job and no money, and I was pretty hungry. I'd have done most anything for three square meals a day. I guess it was luck, what happened next. I walked smack into a job.

"Just like that, walked into it. I'd been hanging around the employment agencies on Sixth Avenue all day until I got disgusted and started walking up toward the park. And then I saw the sign, 'Boy Wanted.' It was in the window of a small carpentry shop.

"The man who ran the place, Mike Clancey, took me on more on account of my being Irish like himself than because I was especially fitted. But he said, 'Ye'll learn as fast as the next, and it does me old heart good to be seein' an O'Connor in me shop, like if we was in Cork.'

"He couldn't pay me much, but he let me sleep behind a partition in the shop, and to me it was luxury, like riding trains in a Pullman compartment. I felt cocky as a prince. Old Mike was good to me, too, and he taught me everything about carpentering; how to tell grades of wood, how to work a lathe, and how to put pieces together.

"It was the time when modern furniture had come into style, but it was expensive in the big stores. So lots of people used to come in and ask Mike to copy things from pictures in the paper. And every October, when people moved, we used to have orders for bookcases and funny little tables, closets, and shelves.

"Mike was always a bit surprised because I didn't chuck my job and shove off, like he somehow (*Continued on page 88.*)

"I know all about babies," she assured him. "Helped my mother bring up these."

"All right, then. Take her. I'll be waiting here when the ship docks tonight."

I WOULDn'T

"Don't cry, Mamma." Nancy Ann's little voice trembled. For her sake I'd have to swallow my pride now—try to win Phil back somehow

The "other woman," who made him a truant from marriage,

DIVORCE HIM

discovers how strong are the invisible bonds of matrimony

I GUESS I was just plain dumb. I guess I thought a marriage service worked some kind of magic that bound a man to a woman forever. Because my husband had never once looked at another girl during our five years of married life I thought he never would.

But Eleanor Ward wasn't just "another girl." She was a sophisticated woman masquerading behind an air of artless naïveté. With her big blue eyes and tumble of yellow curls, she seemed fragile and helpless. She lived in the apartment across from us and taught drawing at a nearby art school. Phil, my husband, had a natural talent for sketching and I urged him to join her class on his free Saturdays. His hobby of drawing served as a release from his dull clerk's job at the bank. He'd made many sketches of our three-year-old daughter, Nancy Ann, and when Eleanor said they showed promise he agreed to attend her class.

That was the beginning. It became a regular custom for Eleanor to come home with him on Saturday nights and have dinner with us. It never occurred to me to be jealous of the two of them laughing and fooling together while I got the meal. And when my husband's dark eyes began to glow with a new excitement during that winter, I thought it was because he was happy with this new work.

Then one spring afternoon I decided to surprise Phil by calling for him when his drawing class was over. The girl at the information desk said she was sure the class had left, but I could see. I approached the room on tiptoe, noiselessly opening the door so that I wouldn't disturb the students. I stood frozen with shock and agony at what I saw. Framed against a flood of spring sunlight, Phil and Eleanor stood in the deserted classroom locked in a passionate embrace, oblivious to everything but each other.

I don't remember how I got home. I only remember being there at last with Nancy on my lap, rocking back and forth in a rocking chair with each rhythmic creak seeming to say, "Eleanor and Phil . . . Eleanor and Phil." I told myself it had been a mistake, that it couldn't be true.

"Don't cry, Mama." Nancy Ann's little voice trembled and her baby hand patted my cheek. I caught her to me fiercely. For her sake I'd have to swallow my pride now—try to win Phil back somehow.

But I didn't have a chance. That night as soon as my husband came in he told me in a sudden wild outburst that he was in love with Eleanor and he wanted a divorce. While he was talking, I stood twisting my wedding ring round and round my finger. When he finished, I asked dully, "Just how have I failed you, Phil?"

"It hasn't been you," he said raggedly, "it's—been our whole life—the monotony and being tied down. I want to go on with my work—"

"And Eleanor can help you while I can't, is that it?"

"Yes." He forced the word out. "She's done everything for me—opened a new life."

I clenched my hands to keep from screaming out my pain. "If you're convinced you no longer care for me, Phil, what about Nancy Ann?"

"I don't know," he cried distractedly. "I've nearly gone crazy trying to keep this madness out of me, but I can't. I want Eleanor." Madness. That was it, I thought, and from out of the turmoil of my mind I clutched at a last hope. "All right, Phil," I began desperately, "I'll let you have Eleanor, but I won't divorce you."

His breath caught sharply.

"I'll give you a year of grace," I went on more steadily. "A year to find out if you really care for her. If you still want to marry her after that I—I'll divorce you."

Phil accepted my ultimatum. I took Nancy Ann and went to the country. I thought I could never face that year alone with the agony of knowing Phil and Eleanor were together, wondering if my husband would come back to me. My little daughter was my one comfort. It was she who brought about my meeting with Ernest Stanton.

He lived next door to the tiny cottage we'd moved into. Nancy Ann had asked him to tell her a story one day when she'd found him in his garden. He'd brought her home and our friendship had started then. He was a bachelor, about thirty-eight, and he'd been a rich cattle owner in Texas. He had a rugged handsomeness and a quiet charm. He took it for granted I was a widow and I let him believe it. He made me feel that my company and that of my little daughter was a rare privilege for a lonesome man. Afterwards when I knew him better I wanted to tell him about Philip and me, but I couldn't bring myself to it. I told myself it didn't really matter.

But as the months went by I knew it did matter. I saw love in Ernest's eyes every time he looked at me, and in my mirror I saw a woman with a radiant face and softly curved lips instead of the tired, desperate creature I had seen such a short time before. The answer was clear. Because of Ernest's friendliness the days had ceased to be a torture. I began to ask myself what my feelings were toward him and I didn't know.

Then one night he asked me to marry him and I knew I was caught in a trap. If I told him about Phil, I realized, he would probably despise me for deceiving him. So I told him I needed time to think. I shall never forget the torment of those next days. I knew I cared for Ernest deeply. He had shown me an understanding and tenderness Phil never had, and I knew the future with him would mean security for me and Nancy Ann.

Yet my husband was still in my heart, too, held there by a tie born of the experiences we'd shared, the tears and laughter of our five years together and the bond of our child. Was I turning to Ernest, perhaps, to assuage the hurt Phil had caused me? I began to see I was now in the position Phil had been in when he had glimpsed a new life ahead with Eleanor. I who had given my husband a year of grace now knew what it was to have a strange unrest burning in my blood. But I had to wait until the year of grace was up.

I forced myself to tell Ernest everything one night while we sat in his garden. The silver and black shadows made everything seem far away and not very real. When I finished he took my hand gently. "It's up to you, Nancy," he said quietly, "you must listen to your heart. That way you will know. . . ."

It was a telegram that made up my mind for me. It came early the next morning. It said:

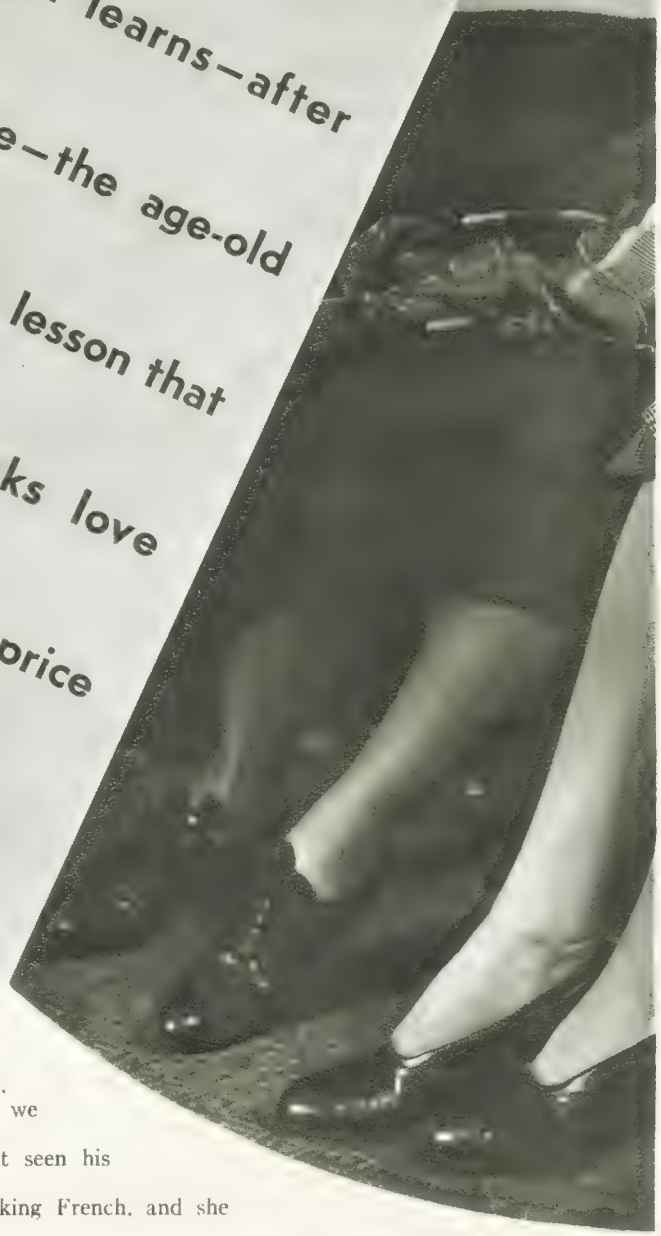
I NEED YOU PHIL

Suddenly I went weak with fear and anxiety. He'd had my address all along and this had been my only word from him. He must be in desperate straits to have gotten in touch with me now. I knew then that nothing else mattered except my husband.

Nancy Ann and I left on the first train. Ernest drove us to the station and we said good-bye. His eyes were sad, for he knew it was forever, that my heart (*Continued on page 99*)

LOVE STAINED

Another girl learns—after it is too late—the age-old heartbreaking lesson that she who seeks love must pay its price



The Story Thus Far:

We were faced with sudden poverty when the New York music school where Dad taught folded up. Until he could resume the burden of our support, Mother and I went to live with Aunt Sophie Farnum in Bullardville, Connecticut.
There we became acquainted with Madison Hoffman, owner of a nearby tobacco farm, a talented violinist and brother of the world-famous concert violinist, Michel Hoffman.
We were not happy as "poor relations" at Aunt Sophie's, so when Madison Hoffman was in need of a housekeeper, Mother applied for the position. He was delighted to have us, and from the first treated us as friends.
Gradually I came to realize that I loved Madison Hoffman. One day he kissed me—then brusquely pushed me away, without any explanation. Did the man I loved despise me, I wondered.
Quite unexpectedly, Michel Hoffman came to stay at the farm, and the first night he mentioned having seen Isabel, Madison's wife, and children in Europe. Madison was married! How had he dared kiss me—like that?
That same night Madison told me of his love and his determination to seek an immediate divorce from his unfaithful wife, who was now in New York, so that he could marry me. The dull days of his absence, with no word from him, were brightened somewhat by the gay, flirtatious Michel, and also by Father's letter, full of gratitude to Madison for having secured him an orchestral position.
After this seeming proof of his devotion, Madison's first note plunged me into abysmal despair. He would not divorce his wife! Michel tried to comfort me—in his own way. Grief had so dulled my reason that I let his passion batter down all barriers.
But soon after, Michel left nonchalantly on a concert tour, robbing me of my trust and faith in men and love.
More misfortune was to follow! Dad broke his arm and Madison was bringing him up to the farm. How could I bear to see Madison? I contrived to be away on an errand during their arrival. Upon my return, I found Madison waiting outside, desperately eager to talk to me. I would not listen, but rushed into the house only to be confronted by two children. The little girl demanded, "Do you know where my father is? Mama wants you both. Now—at once."

The Story Continues:

SO MADISON had brought his wife and children—Janet and Danny—up from New York to hurt me even more! A crueller insult he could hardly have conceived. I went hot—and then cold. But the very enormity of the affront gave me courage, a bitter, harsh courage.

"You will come, please?" Janet asked, her big blue eyes and dainty, doll-like face looking up into mine with perfect childish innocence.

I took a quick breath, answering calmly, "Yes, of course—I'll be there in a minute."

"And my fa-*ther?* Where is he?"

"He—" The grim determination flashed over me that there must be no evasions—no falsehoods. "I don't know. I think he is coming. I saw him a few moments ago."

"*Maman* says he went to meet you," Janet continued innocently. "Why he didn't come back wiss you?"

"*With* you!" Danny corrected. "You always say *wiss.* Put your tongue between your teeth to say TH."

"Uncle Michel likes the way I talk," Janet retorted. "He says he hopes I don't ever talk like an American. But there comes my fa-*ther!*" She pointed out the kitchen window; through it we could see Madison approaching the house. "I like my fa-*ther,*" she confided. "He went away when I was born in Paris and I never saw him till we came to America."

Then what he had been trying to tell me was true—Madison hadn't seen his wife in years!

Danny said something to his sister in an imperative undertone, speaking French, and she

gave him a rebellious look, but said no more. To me he gave a pained glance of apology; and in that one little incident was revealed the tragedy of a ten-year-old boy whose innocent mind was already being tainted by the necessity for intrigue—forced to guard his tongue lest he reveal the dishonor of his mother. A pitiful, unfair burden for a lad of Danny's years.

My heart went out to Danny at that moment, so loyal, so unnecessarily wise in social deceit. I could have taken him in my arms and hugged him, snatching him out of that tainted environment. I felt spring up in me a bitter resentment for Madison and his wife for permitting their own personal troubles to bring such an emotional conflict into his sensitive life. His happiness and Janet's should come before their own. Those two children were entitled to a home life that needed no apologizing for.

Something else flashed over me also: Michel had said Madison doubted that Danny was his son. But looking down into that sturdy little face the resemblance to Madison was clear. How could anyone ever have doubted it?

Madison entered at that moment. His eyes flashed to mine, and in their brown depths I read almost the same emotion that I had seen in little Danny's blue ones: Pained apology, tenderness, sincerity.

Strange what one glance can do! In that instant, I knew I had done Madison a terrible wrong in ever doubting his sincerity and fineness. It wasn't artistic temperament or instability that had made him abandon me and go back to his wife. On the contrary it was his strict sense of honour—and the knowledge of what he owed to his *son*. One glance at the boy in New York must have made him see as it had made *me* see. His whole expression, now, as he looked at me and then at Danny, told me the depth of self-condemnation he must have suffered. His eyes pleaded with me to understand. Tender, harassed — yet brave. It was his courage that filled me with admiration.

"Have you met my son Danny?" Madison asked quietly. And the look of pride and pain in his eyes was enough to tell the whole story.

"And Janet?" He put a hand sweetly on her curly blond head. A nice gesture, but it didn't hold the heartache that was in his regard for Danny, Danny—his son.

"Yes, I have, Madison." I looked him directly in the eyes. "I think they are very sweet, and I understand *everything*." For several tense, unforgettable seconds our glances held and a whole heartful of understanding passed between us. "I'm sorry I left you, out there, so—abruptly."

Danny and Janet stood listening, their bright eyes going from face to face. They must have sensed that more was meant than was on the surface of our words. I didn't want them to guess too much. So I took Janet's little hand briskly in mine.

"Take me to your mother. She wants us both, Madison." Once more my eyes met his, and mine said: "We've got to see it through."

How I wished then that I had not misjudged him, that I had stopped back there in the pasture a few minutes ago to hear his explanation. I would have liked to let him know that in those moments with Danny and Janet—sweet children—I had made up my mind that whatever else happened, it was *their* happiness and welfare that must be considered. *Their* lives must be straightened out if it were still possible. Neither my life nor Madison's nor Isabel's counted when measured up against the children.

I only hoped that his wife was not going to make too horrible a scene. I tried to act entirely at ease as, with Janet's soft, moist little palm in mine, I followed her into Madison's studio.

It was a picture that will always remain in my mind as first impressions are likely to. So

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typical of Isabel. It characterized her whole shallow, egotistical, tyrannical nature—with its pretty little pretenses and her flair for the dramatic.

She lay back in Madison's over-stuffed lounging chair looking a little bit too wan and tired. A petite, heart-shaped face with big, plaintive, insincere eyes. Isabel could make them look charmingly innocent, nevertheless. Bright golden ringlets that made a soft frame. A pouting mouth with drooping corners, the meltingly unhappy mouth that men like to imagine they can kiss into contentment; and Isabel *could* make those woe-begone corners turn up swiftly when she wished, in a cute, flashing little smile of childish delight.

She had both Mother and Father dancing attendance on her, both of them deeply touched by her helplessness, her pretty face, and her air of expecting service as a matter of course.

"Hello, Madison dear," she said with disarming sweetness, and I knew with a woman's swift instinct that the honeyed tone of intimacy was for *me*. As clearly as words it said: "He's mine and I'm hanging on to him." She moved wearily and heaved a deep sigh. "I'm so glad you found Dolly." Her blue eyes came to me then. "I want to be put to bed, please, Dolly. I just couldn't manage alone." She closed her eyes and her voice grew faint.

I FELT the blood run hotly to my cheeks and then drain away. Her air! As if I were her maid! Undress her! I shot a quick glance at Madison and saw his mouth tighten to a grim line. My brain began to click off reactions in lightning flashes. Isabel was trying to humiliate me. And I—for all our sakes—must positively *not* show resentment. No scene! Just as quickly as we could, of course, Mother and Father and I would go away, avoiding the impossible situation. But *now* tonight, and as long as we might be forced to stay there by circumstances, I must rise superior to Isabel's cattiness.

"Why of *course* you shall be put to bed," I cried quickly. "Mother! See if there is a hot water bag in the house—and if not, heat some irons." Then I walked over to Father, his arm in a splint, and put my arm about him. "Hello, Dad! You old darling. You get out now. We'll have time for each other later." I almost pushed both him and Mother out of the room, and then went back to Isabel. "You look completely worn out," I told her sympathetically, struggling hard for mastery of myself. "Are you too tired to eat a bite of supper?"

"I'll have a little something in bed," she answered, sighing very wearily. "Take off my slippers, now, please. And Madison dear, do take the children to see the cows. They're just crazy to see some real live cows and chickens."

I put Isabel Hoffman to bed that night with gritted teeth but a sweet smile. Her manner was so obviously intended to make me feel like a servant. And I was equally determined to act like a hostess.

She wore beautiful underthings and a nightgown that must have cost as much as Mother's or my entire street suit. I felt a little envy, perhaps jealousy, over the undoubted allure of her small-boned, graceful body which she showed no hesitation at all in exposing perfectly nude to Mother and me. And there was a clutching at my heart when she directed Mother to put the two irons wrapped in flannel in Madison's bed; and then slipped in after them with a cute little air of possession.

Isabel knew from long experience, I suppose, that she looked very intriguing in her blue silk and lace negligee, all propped up in bed with pillows. At any rate she made it a point to have Mother call Madison in to her. But I wouldn't have let her know for anything in the world how it hurt me to see her in Madison's bed. And it was small satisfaction to have him ask Mother to prepare Michel's room for him. The children were to sleep on couches in the studio.

I wondered how long a visit they were going to make, and I was still wounded that Madison had brought her. It seemed so unnecessary.

I served Isabel her supper on a tray. Then the rest of us all sat down to supper in the dining room. I could scarcely eat for the turmoil of emotion. I had to force myself not to look too often at Madison. My heart hungered for the contact of our glances at least, but I knew I must curb that desire and crush all hope from my heart. During the short period that we might be forced to remain at the farm, Mother and Father and I, I was determined there should be no clandestine meetings. My sense of integrity and Madison's too, I felt sure, would demand a complete ignoring of the past.

And yet, an explanation *had* to take place between us. We had to establish our common ground of daily contacts.

After the children had been put to bed, Madison followed me up to the cow shed where I had to do the milking and other chores. I had a lantern on the floor and was milking when he

I crept close to the window. Madison's violin case lay on the table—near my note!

came in. My heart came pounding up into my throat, for it brought back the memory of that other time when he had come to me, but I managed to speak calmly, leaning my head against the Jersey's warm side so that he might not read the agitation in my face.

"I want to thank you, Dolly," he began in a tight, strained voice "for being so—good—and so—sweet with Isabel—and the children."

"I was glad to," I said as steadily as my trembling lips would let me. "The children are darling—and I *love* Danny already!"

"He's—" Madison's voice broke. "He's my—*son.* I mean my *real* son. That's why—"

"I understood all that the minute I saw him," I said quickly. "You don't have to say another word. I understand—and—you're right—of course." My control did break then, just for a knotted sob.

"Dolly dear!" I felt him press toward me—closer, closer.

"No Madison!" I cried, low and tense. I knew I couldn't stand it if he touched me. All my resolutions would go crashing.

He picked up the note and began to read it. I must get in there before it was too late

"Give it to me, please!" I begged. "Oh, please forget. Don't say anything to *anybody.*"

"You're right. You owe Danny—and little Janet, too—the best home you can make for them. You and I don't count. Of course, I'll go—just as soon as I can. If you can let us stay a few days—"

"If I could only let you have money!" he cried desperately. "But I'm almost penniless. Isabel had bills. It cost a lot to stay in New York. That's one thing I wanted to tell you. I had no money to stay in New York so we *had* to come here."

I breathed a sigh of relief at that. He hadn't done it callously.

"Perhaps we can go to Aunt Sophie's. But anyway—don't worry about us."

"You're so grand, Dolly!" His voice and its depth of emotion filled my heart. Madison was so fine. If only things had been different! My blood was calling for him. To go into his arms! To put my head on his breast! To be held close! But I just pressed my forehead into the Jersey's side and bit my lips and tried to still the surge and swell of my heart.

"While I'm here, Madison," I said, my lips numb, "it will be hard to be—indifferent. But we must be. And we mustn't see each other—alone—any more." My throat tightened and no more words could come. Tears were stinging my eyes and sobs aching for release. I forced myself to take a deep breath. "And now go! Please! I want you to—because—I love you so terribly much."

I heard him gasp. I *felt* he was near—nearer. My mind was whirling. I sprang up and shrank from him.

"No! No! Don't touch me! I—" My blood was throbbing with the mad desire to go to him. "Madison! No." I leaned back against the wall, faint, my knees shaking.

"Darling!" came the husky cry. Then a suppressed groan. And I heard his feet go stumbling away from me. Through the carriage-shed and on back to the house.

With empty, aching heart I went back to my milking. Nerveless fingers performed their chores. Then back to Mother and Father. And forced gaiety. Dad mustn't guess. He was so happy to be there with us. So proud of Madison. So innocent of all the intrigue that was going on about him.

"In six weeks the doctor says my arm'll be good as ever. Then we'll go back to New York—the three of us. I'm to have my job back any time." His eyes glowed, his dear face all smiles.

"Mom!" I said desperately when I found her alone. "It's awful to be here. But we can't go without explaining to Dad. And he's so happy!"

"Poor lamb!" Mother said. "I've never seen him so happy. Can you put up with it for six weeks."

"I must, Mom. I guess we can do anything if we really try."

"I've watched you, honey," Mother said softly. "No one would ever know what you're going through." She put her arms around me and we clung together. "Madison is suffering, too." she said. "But I'm glad he's realized where his duty lies."

"Mom, please don't talk about him. There's so much more than you understand. He's wonderful, Mom. He's just wonderful."

I had told Mother I could stand the next six weeks but as the days passed, I wondered if I'd have the strength. To see Madison constantly, to sit opposite him at table and not look at him, not let him or others see what was hammering at my heart. Especially the sly eyes of Isabel and the observing ones of the children.

They were darling children, nice mannered in every way and that was a puzzle to me till I discovered they had been raised in private schools. Passionately loyal *(Continued on page 92)*

CHILD

A real life story from a girl

"WHAT'S the age of this girl?" The old man—Jared had told me he was a justice of the peace—looked from the paper in his hand and gave me a piercing stare. I was afraid to answer, but Jared spoke up promptly. "Eighteen, just like it says thar on the license."

The sharp eyes searched me from the top of my sunbonneted head to my toes, unaccustomed to any covering at all, and now twisting miserably in a pair of my cousin Buck's outgrown shoes.

"Danged if she ain't the youngest lookin' eighteen I ever saw. I'd reckon she'd bare passed twelve. How 'bout the consent of a parent or gardeen?"

Now it was Aunt Vashti's turn for a glib answer.

"She ain't got neither, but I'm her aunt what raised her from a young-un, and Jared Dismuke has my full consent to wed with her."

"Well, then—" The justice of the peace hooked glasses behind his ears and opened a greasy-looking book. "Letty Talcott, do you take this man for your lawful wedded husband?" At a nudge from Jared I gulped out, "Yes, sir!" In a few minutes it was all over. Jared's and Aunt Vashti's lies to the clerk and justice had held water. At fourteen years of age I was married "come Dick, come Devil," as the mountain saying paraphrased "for better or worse."

It all comes back so clearly, now that I've been reading recently the hue and cry about the child bride of Tennessee and the passage of laws to eliminate a condition that seems more fitting to "Mother India" than to enlightened America. But there was nobody to protest when I was given in marriage —and that phrase "given" is accurately used! Looking back, I can see that until the old justice asked: "Letty Talcott, do you take . . ." I had not once been consulted nor been allowed to voice one word in the matter. "Charity-kin" like me didn't have much voice about anything in the backwoods settlement on Roaring River which was the only world I knew. I wasn't wanted in Uncle Bud's and Aunt Vashti's crowded house. To pay for being allowed to stay there I knew I must work harder and mind quicker than any of the other children, though even they stepped lively before Aunt Vashti's shrewish voice and her hand that was quick to deliver a slap.

Uncle Bud had made one half-hearted protest just at first when my aunt broke the gratifying news that Jared Dismuke was willing to take me off their hands.

"Sho, Letty ain't old enough for weddin'!" he drawled. "If he wants her, in two—three years he can come ag'in and talk about it."

"Don't be a bigger fool than you have to, Bud Talcott!" cried my aunt angrily. "Let him take her when he's a mind to, and git us shet of her while we can! He might not wait."

"Why'n't he pick himself a woman, then, 'stead of a half-growed gal?" Uncle Bud persisted. "Don't seem right."

"He fancies Letty and he wants to go ahead and marry her now for fear somebody else might git her—one way or t'other—if he waited till she's growed!" my aunt explained, adding impatiently: "He ain't goin' to sleep with her, nor nothin', till she's older—jest have her bound to him and there to help his ma about their place. Now, it ain't no use yore arguin', Bud, 'cause I've give Jared her promise."

My good-natured, shiftless uncle shrugged, bit a fresh chew of tobacco and the matter rested. I was standing silently there the whole time while they were discussing disposing of me as freely as if I'd been a colt or a heifer, and I had no more choice. But *I* could dread and fear the destiny toward which they were leading me!

About marriage, marriage to anybody, I had no illusions. Existence on Roaring River didn't dress up the facts of life in romance; and living in the Talcotts' squalid cabin had shown them to me baldly. The lot of wives I knew was hard work, frequent and painful childbearing, more hard work, and so on, till death brought rest. Mountain women walked a pace or two behind their men folk; ate when husbands and sons had finished; spoke when spoken to; my vixenish Aunt Vashti being the only exception to this rule.

I was not surprised when Jared Dismuke came to make his proposal to my aunt; although he was a man, twenty-six years old. I had felt the steady scrutiny of his bold, black eyes in meeting when the circuit-rider preached; once he had met me with my cousins in the crossroads store and offered to buy me chocolate drops, which I had timidly refused. Another time, encountering me on the path from the spring, he had made an effort to grab me and I'd fled up the trail on my bare feet

BRIDE

who was "given" in marriage

like a startled deer. Even at fourteen, I was woman enough to recognize these conventional signs of mountain courting and child enough to shrink from what they led to.

I didn't want to go away with this black-eyed young man whom I scarcely knew. Although the Dismukes lived not far away, they rarely came to our side of the ridge because it was Medway territory, and the Dismuke-Medway feud once had burned hotly, though now a kind of armed truce existed. Jared was reported to be one of the "fightin'est" of the fierce-tempered Dismukes. It was his bullet, people said, that killed Rufe Medway in the famous shooting-match when three Dismukes and three Medways died, though Jared then was only fifteen.

I didn't want to live with Jared Dismuke in his cabin over the ridge, wash his clothes, cook his meals, sleep in his bed and bear his children in terror and pain. I longed to stay at Talcotts' where I wasn't welcome, in the familiar society of the Talcott children.

But nobody inquired what I wanted, for it made not the slightest difference.

In Jared's wagon we drove from the county seat after the marriage ceremony and he and Aunt Vashti chatted affably, ignoring me as I was accustomed to be ignored by adults. I never had had cause to love my aunt, but now I wanted to cling to her when she climbed out and left us where the road forked to the ridge. A desperate impulse seized me to leap over the moving wheels and run after her; but at the very moment I was gathering my trembling limbs to spring, arms caught me from behind and I found myself dragged around against Jared's broad chest with a force that almost suffocated me, while his dark face grinned triumphantly down a few inches from my own.

"Quit yore fightin', sugar! Ain't nobody told you what comes after weddin'? Yo're mine, now!"

When some instinct that I could not control made me keep on struggling wildly, he lost patience and handled me so roughly I cried out in pain. The horse had plodded steadily on meanwhile, till now the lights of his cabin were at hand. He let me go with an angry oath.

"If that's the way you're goin' to act I needn't fret myself tryin' to make things easy for you!" he said meaningly. "We'll see whether I can't tame you tonight, miss!"

Mrs. Dismuke was a gaunt, still-faced woman whom I'd seen only a few times in all my life. She gave me a limp hand to shake when I weakly followed Jared inside. Then, with folded arms, she looked me up and down appraisingly.

"She ain't very big," she remarked dryly.

"Good things come in small packages, Ma," Jared said jovially, removing my white ruffled sunbonnet with a proprietary hand. "Guess we can feed her up till she gets her full growth."

Frightened, wretched, already miserably homesick, I blundered about the strange place, trying to help Mrs. Dismuke set food on the table and later clear up after supper, while Jared went out to feed the stock. With kind intention, no doubt, she had urged me to "draw up and set in" with Jared for tonight. I obeyed, but found it impossible to force a morsel past my lips. They felt stiff and strange. She was a laconic, silent woman. When the last pot was washed she phlegmatically said, "Good night to ye," and withdrew through a door on the right, remarking as she pointed to another on the left, "That there's yore room."

After a while I took my bundle of personal belongings and fearfully stole inside. Jared's clothes hung from pegs on the wall; there was only one big homemade bed in there. The last desperate hope disappeared that what Aunt Vashti had said about "waiting" might be true. Shivering, nervously fumbling and starting at every sound, I undressed, put on my coarse cotton nightgown and crawled into bed.

Strong though my terror was, the claims of weariness were stronger. This had been a long, exhausting day. The thick cornshuck mattress billowed about me with comforting familiarity. I plunged miles down into sleep.

And then, with a horrid sense of shock, I was dragged out again! Rough hands had seized me; powerful arms forced back my efforts to rise as easily as I'd have held a bird. Callously, mercilessly, as he might have broken an unruly colt to the saddle, the man who was my husband availed himself of his vested right in my helpless, immature body. It was a distressing, a nerve-shattering experience I would give a lot to be able to forget. Not until years later did I even know that normally women share the joys of marriage equally with men. To me it was a cross to be borne in silent endurance and revulsion.

I could scarcely bear to face the day next morning, creeping out of the bedroom with cringing reluctance, but the Dismukes did not seem to notice how I felt nor to pay me any special attention at all. The affairs of the cabin and farm got briskly under way. I was shown the duties that henceforth would be mine; plunged into them, thankful for something to take my mind off the horror it dwelt on and, as the days grew into weeks, gradually I sank into acceptance of things as they were, for I never had been led to expect very much pleasure out of life at best.

The work was hard and unceasing but I was used to that; and Ma Dismuke wasn't unkind, just indifferent; while Jared, now that I'd learned to submit stoically to him, was fairly good-natured, and both his mother and I took wary pains never to rouse his temper about anything. I don't suppose Jared had ever dreamed a man might be gentle, tender, loving with a wife. What I missed most was the companionship of my young cousins; I used to picture them on the grapevine swing, wading in the ford, or playing "I spy" on moonlight nights, and I'd ache with homesickness.

But childhood was permanently, if prematurely, ended for me, and before the autumn had passed I found myself preparing to have a child of my own.

NOBODY makes a fuss over expectant mothers around Roaring River, even a pathetic child-mother like myself. Sick or well, there was work to be done, and when I'd stagger, half-fainting with dizziness or nausea, Ma Dismuke would merely suggest that I lie down "till it passed," pointing out that "everybody felt that way."

Only one person ever looked at me with comprehending eyes, and that was Dr. Mary Conway, the "lady doctor" from the settlement school a group of "flat-country foreigners" had established in recent years on the state road over beyond the ridge. I had never been there, but I'd heard they taught folks carpentry, sewing, and weaving as well as things from school books. There was a little hospital cottage where they fixed teeth and even cut out tonsils, and the "lady doctor" and her nurse rode all over on horseback, visiting sick people back where cars couldn't go.

I saw her first that summer at the burying of old Grandpa Pitts who'd passed on at the age of ninety. Sick and depressed by the heat and the weight of the unborn child, I'd left the crowd around the grave and sunk down on a log just outside the churchyard. The tall, sun-browned woman, wearing a mannish shirt and riding skirt, had driven up in a shabby car, and she'd ignored the funeral and come straight to me.

"Feeling bad?" she asked me with a gentle touch on my shoulder.

I murmured, "Yes'm," and as I pushed back my hat and awkwardly rose, I saw the eyes behind her glasses blink and widen as they passed quickly over my misshapen figure.

"Well, bless your little soul, no wonder you are! Come lie down on the back seat of Old Liz, here; maybe I can make you feel better." She had a thermos jug of ice water in her car, and from her bag she fished out a bottle of what I know now was ammonia spirits. She stayed there, talking to me soothingly, until the funeral was over. She even offered to drive me home, but Jared had his wagon. I must have told her far more than I realized in answer to her tactful questions because for days afterward I remembered how she'd looked at me, so kind and sorrowful. It must be how a mother'd look at you, I thought wistfully, if you had one who loved you.

But Ma Dismuke was not totally indifferent to my welfare, for when the time drew near to early August, the date her calculations had set, she advised Jared to engage Granny Sutfield, the neighborhood midwife, to "see me through."

"Figger I won't be able to handle it right," she stated briefly. "Letty's full young and little to be birthin' a child. Figger she's goin' to have it hard."

Have it hard! I had been considered old enough to help when three of the Talcott babies were born, and had not been spared sight nor sound of Aunt Vashti's part in it. But even so, I'd never imagined in my worst apprehensions anything like the terrific agony that struck me down into the valley of the shadow when my hour came!

It was a stormy day in the first part of August when fog descended like a blanket on the mountain, bringing an almost wintry chill. They lighted a fire in the room where I lay writhing on the thick, corn-shuck mattress, and when Granny Sutfield came she promptly set a pot of mysterious herbs on the hob to brew and placed an ax under my bed "to cut the pains."

None of her conjure-charms helped. For more than thirty hours I shrieked and struggled on the bed which might have been a medieval torture rack. I was half mad with pain and every sense seemed to be a hundred times acuter than usual, as if to make me feel my suffering more. The smallest sounds were exaggerated. Ma's guinea-hens cackling in the field rattled like thunder. Every whispered word in the room roared in my ears.

It was after sundown on the second day that I heard Ma telling Jared he must go for Dr. Conway.

"That was a convulsion-fit she had a while ago, and women're apt to die in convulsion-fits. Tell that lady-doctor she better come a-hurryin'."

I must have been unconscious some time, for when I next was aware of myself, dark night had fallen and Jared was back again, for I heard his voice saying, "The doc is 'cross the mountain with a bad-off young-un. They sent her word to hurry, and this here's her nephew who's a-studyin' to be a doctor. He brung her stuff and come to see could he help, some."

And then, quite near me, someone whispered: "God in heaven!" and I turned my tortured eyes up to a strange face bending over me. It was a young face and strained with shocked pity. Another whirl of confusion spun me like a leaf; when my mind cleared again I heard the new voice calling out sharply:

"I've got to handle this myself *and now* if anything's done at all! It's an emergency instrument case, but I can't wait for the doctor. Get me boiling water—plenty of it! *And for God's sake hurry!*"

Suddenly a cloth covered my face; a sweetish smell poured through. For a few breaths I inhaled it in ravenous gulps. Then blessed oblivion!

It must have been near dawn when I came listlessly back to life. The pain was gone, but I felt too weak to move a finger. The fire burned low in the quiet room. The only sound was muffled snores from Granny Sutfield, asleep on a pallet in the corner. But close beside me a young man with red hair was sitting, two fingers on my wrist, a watch in his other hand.

"Better?" he whispered, smiling. I could see how much he resembled the lady doctor when he looked at me like that.

"Did the baby—"

"Don't try to talk yet."

"Please!"

"Of course, you want to know, poor child, and I will tell you. The baby couldn't have lived, even if I'd been able to bring it into the world alive. There were things wrong in the way it had developed. Try not to feel too badly."

"I'm glad it's dead," I murmured.

STILL holding my pulse, he laid the other hand gently on my forehead. He didn't seem shocked, only so, so sorry for me. "I wish I could 'a died, too. Then it would have been all over."

I think the average person would have answered this with: "Aren't you ashamed to talk so!" or "You'll feel differently tomorrow." But by instinct this boy seemed to know what my wounded spirit needed was not encouragement but sympathy. Softly, gently, he stroked my forehead and temples while he whispered:

"Poor little girl! Poor, sweet little girl!"

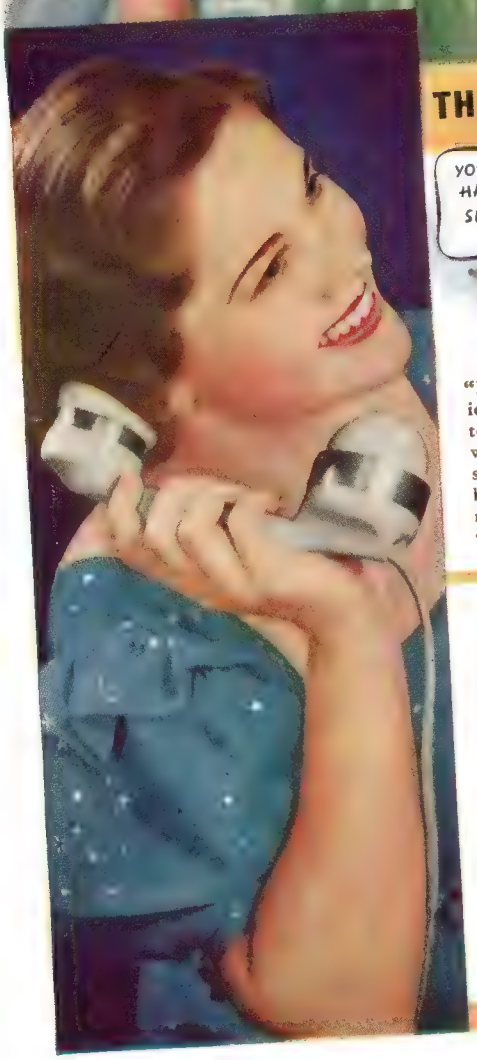
And I think it was in that very moment that my poor soul rose and went to him without reservation, to cling to him as a fanatic clings to his religion—glorifying Matt Conway as its ideal forevermore. To my dying day I will remember that hour before dawn as the turning point of my whole existence. Before then I had been as unaware of the deeper meanings of life as a young animal. Now the power of love had set its divine spark in me, and, in spite of my brief years, I became a woman.

Daylight brought Dr. Mary Conway, undaunted by a night's vigil at the bedside of a desperately sick child. She listened to the report Matt Conway made to her in a jargon of terms I couldn't understand, and nodded gravely.

"A good job, Matt—a fine job for a junior medic who'd only seen this kind of case handled by others. If I'd been here I couldn't have done much more—certainly not have saved the baby." I was not intended to hear, but my ears, still acutely sharpened, caught the next words. "I'd felt sure it *would* be deformed, poor little mite—born of a mother who is a child herself."

It was Dr. Conway who persuaded (*Continued on page 66*)

so You WANT A LOVELY COMPLEXION, TOO? WELL, YOU CALLED THE RIGHT NUMBER!



THE DIONNE QUINS give you their "Beauty Secret"

"If you think *your* complexion is a problem, you ought to hear about ours! For we've always had such sensitive skin. And if it hadn't been for Dr. Dafoe, goodness knows what troubles we might have had!"

"When we were tiny babies, Dr. Dafoe bathed us only with Olive Oil. So when we were ready for soap and water baths you can imagine how carefully he chose the soap made from the most soothing ingredients."

"Dr. Dafoe chose Palmolive, the soap made with gentle Olive Oil. We're mighty glad he did, for we've never had any complexion trouble. In fact, everyone says we have unusually lovely soft, smooth skin!"

WHY DR. DAFOE CHOSE PALMOLIVE

Because the Quins were born prematurely their skin has always required very special care. Here is Dr. Dafoe's own statement:

"For some time after their birth the Dionne Quintuplets were bathed with Olive Oil. When the time arrived for soap and water baths, we chose Palmolive Soap exclusively for bathing these famous babies."

Allan Roy Dafoe

"Isn't our experience a beauty lesson for *you*? Doesn't it stand to reason, that if Palmolive is safest for *our* tender skin, it must be best for *yours*, too? Well anyway, our advice is, only *Palmolive*, the soap made with gentle Olive Oil."

Why Palmolive, made with Olive Oil, makes complexions soft, smooth, young again

Beauty experts advise the daily use of Palmolive Soap because Palmolive is made with Olive and Palm oils. That's why its lather is different—rich, soothing and penetrating. Palmolive softens, freshens and stimulates the skin, helping to restore attractive, natural color.

Why not use Palmolive regularly? Let its gentle, *different* lather help make your complexion lovelier, *younger-looking!*

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TO KEEP YOUR OWN COMPLEXION ALWAYS LOVELY, USE THIS BEAUTY SOAP CHOSEN FOR THE QUINS

All DRESSED UP AND READY TO GO

...BE SURE YOU'RE WEARING—

GLAZO'S "Misty" Tints

FOR that Memorable Moment... that Occasion demanding your most glamorous gown, your carefullest grooming, let one of Glazo's "Misty" nail polish colors climax your charm.

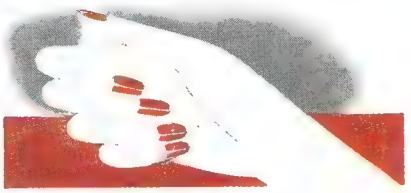
Choose one of these debonair new shades...Thistle, Old Rose, Russet and Suntan, Rust, Dahlia, Imperial Red, or Shell, Flame, Natural. Among them there are bound to be the perfect colors for *you*...to flatter your own skin-tone, to blend with your chosen fabrics.

Watch your hands bloom into new, exciting beauty! Discover how poised, how sure of yourself you feel... conscious that you are looking your loveliest. Wearing Glazo's misty, smoky tints, you're *Right to your Fingertips!*

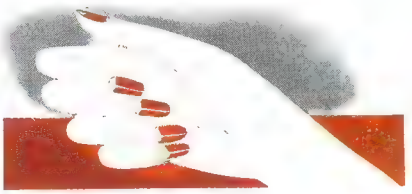
Smooth as a debutante's chatter is Glazo on the nail. Its satin lustre doesn't fade, doesn't peel. And how Glazo does solve that "thickening" nuisance! The last drop in that thrifty 25-cent bottle goes on as easily, as perfectly, as the first.

GLAZO *The Smart Manicure*

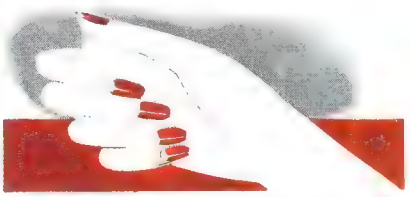
Subtle, exciting colors... and long-wearing Glazo doesn't fade or thicken!



OLD ROSE *A subtle, smoky rose. Utterly feminine and flattering. Lovely with fashion's new "off-colors" with pastels...No chipping...No peeling.*



THISTLE *A new misty beige-rose. Equally perfect with pale or dark skin. Excellent for wear with gray, beige, green, brown...No chipping...No peeling.*



RUSSET *A misty red with subtle brown undertone. Becoming to almost every type of skin. Enchanting with light or dark colors...No chipping...No peeling.*

An absorbing book-length true story of a love that started without warning and burned its way through all barriers

WHEN a married woman is nearing forty, she generally feels that life and love are finished. She has known passion and she has felt it dwindle to indifference. She adjusts herself to the thought that romance is a thing of the past and trains herself to be satisfied with a matter-of-fact relationship that stirs but little if at all. I was that way at the time when I met Graydon Trent.

I saw him first at a dinner party in Washington given by Mrs. Huntley West. Jack and I went to a great many such affairs when we were in Washington. Jack said it was good business, but so far as I know he never talked business on these occasions. We just went and met wealthy and influential people, talked the usual shallow chatter, and came away. But once in a while Jack would say to me beforehand, "Have an eye out for such and such a person. Try to get acquainted. He may prove to be a valuable contact."

And he had said that about Graydon Trent.

So I watched him while I talked with the colonel's daughter on my left or the young under-secretary on my right. It was young Carleton who told me Trent's life story—in a thumbnail sketch.

"He's the oldest son of the Trent family," he informed me. "You know—the Maryland Trents. Coal, steel, oil, chemicals, and everything else you can think of. They own so many companies outright and control so many more through interlocking directorates that they say there isn't a million-dollar deal anywhere in the country without their hands being in it."

"He looks like an aristocrat rather than a bondholder," I said. "I'd say he was a blue blood and rather bored with life."

"He is a blue blood," Carleton said. "The Trents were among the first settlers. They had money when they came; and they've taken care of it since. There hasn't been a waster in the crowd. Each generation has produced its financier; and he's guided the family fortunes. That seems to be understood."

I watched Graydon Trent slowly drink what I knew was his fourth or fifth glass of wine, at the same time giving polite but half-absent attention to the young matron at his left.

"And is he the financier of his family now?" I asked.

Carleton chuckled.

"I'll say he's not," he said. "He's the one that ought to be. He's the keenest of the lot; and he knows the technique of it. The old fellows have been grooming him for years. They want him to take over, but they don't dare trust him."

"Why not?" I asked.

"Too much of an idealist. They're afraid of him."

I LOOKED with new interest at Trent. Suddenly I found his eyes meeting mine, and even at that distance I saw that they were grey and steady. He did not drop them, but looked right back into mine across the ten feet that separated us, till I myself shifted my gaze. I had the queer feeling that we had spoken to each other during that brief moment when our glances met.

During the rest of the dinner I didn't look at him again. But an hour later I had no feeling of surprise when he came straight across the reception room and stood before me, bowing slightly and smiling, his grey eyes looking directly into mine again. It was as if he were keeping an appointment.

"I've been wanting to meet you all evening, Mrs. Haynes," he said with simple directness. "My name is—"

"Graydon Trent," I finished for him with a smile. "I've been wanting to meet you too."

A pleased look came into his clean-cut face, wiping off a dozen years from his age and making him seem almost boyish.

"Well, that's certainly nice to hear," he said, "but why?"

I laughed.

"Haven't you ever seen somebody across a room and suddenly thought you'd like to meet him?" I asked.

He threw back his head and laughed.

"You think I'm silly?" I asked him.

"Not a bit," he returned, still smiling, "only of course you had the answer to your question before you asked it. That's why I'm here, because I looked across the table and saw you and suddenly made up my mind that I wanted to meet you."

His eyes were bright and alive. I realized that I was smiling into them and that I was saying nothing—that I was failing to pick up the conversation as a person was supposed to do quickly at such parties, never allowing even a second to slip by unfilled by words.

Even then I didn't hurry to speak. It was he who broke the silence.

"They've begun dancing," he said. "Will you give me the pleasure?"

And so presently I was in his arms, drifting about the ballroom—and still not talking.

He danced as nearly perfectly as a human being can, suiting his steps to the nuances of the music, yet not doing any of the intricate movements that make dancing a matter of mental concentration. It was queer, I thought. We two had looked across a table at one another; a spark had leaped between us, drawing us together; he had come to me and put his arms around me; I had my head practically on his breast; his cheek was touching my hair; my blood was quickened; I was more alive than I had been in years. And yet we hadn't talked. We didn't know each other at all. We hadn't even been introduced!

I wondered at myself. Why, I was almost like a schoolgirl; I, a woman of thirty-eight, twice married, disillusioned, hard-boiled, and yet suddenly awake and throbbingly conscious of the man whose arms held me and whose body moved close to mine in time to music.

Love? I had thought it was—the day Jerry Drake crushed me in his grimy arms after winning the Indianapolis Racing Classic

That music stopped now, and Trent guided me quietly out onto the terrace. When he had seated me on a marble bench overhung by shrubbery, he reached for his cigarettes, still not speaking. Not till we were both smoking did he say anything. Then, simply:

"I enjoyed that—a lot."

"So did I," I answered just as simply, and added no flutter of words such as would have ordinarily come in such circumstances.

He blew smoke slowly. Then he said, "It's strange that we've never met before, isn't it? Do you live here in Washington?"

"Only part of each year," I told him. "My husband is a mining promoter. We travel a lot—wherever there's something new and promising in mines."

"That must be interesting," he said.

"It was at first," I agreed. "But I must admit that it bores me now. It's always the same story. We find a mining property that seems worth developing. Jack and the experts get the estimates. Then we come back and Jack finds somebody with money enough to buy it. It's always the same. I don't even have the thrill of wondering whether we're going to be rich or not. Somebody else always takes the risks. Yes, I'm bored a good deal of the time."

He blew smoke again.

"I don't know anything deadlier than being bored," he said quietly.

"Don't tell me you ever get bored," I said. "According to what I hear, Trent's, Incorporated is a—a starfish with a hundred arms. I should think it would keep you on the jump every minute to see that each arm is doing its job."

"Why didn't you call it an octopus?" he said grimly.

It was a few years later, while I was singing and dancing in a Rio café to earn passage back home, that I met Jack

I first saw Graydon Trent at a formal dinner in Washington. It seemed as if a spark leaped between us the moment our eyes met

"That's what it is. And if I were the brains of it, I'd be busy enough. But I'm not."

"You're part of the brains, surely," I said. "You must be."

He shook his head.

"I'm supposed to be," he said, "but Uncle John and Uncle Bill know better than to let me get control of the tentacles."

I laughed.

"You do make it seem like an octopus when you talk like that," I said. "Why won't they let you run things?"

"Because they know that if I did, it would stop sucking up dollars," he answered grimly. "Besides, I couldn't do it. They still think I will some day, but I won't—not unless they let me run it my own way; and I guess that would soon be the end of Trent's, Incorporated."

THE sound of music began again inside. He tossed his cigarette to the ground and stepped on it.

"Will you dance with me again?" he asked.

I laughed. "And forget about the dollar-grasping tentacles?" I asked, rising.

After a minute or two of floating about the ballroom to the dreamy strains of a Strauss waltz, he said, "Somebody will be cutting in on us pretty soon. Before that happens, I want to be sure of a chance to get to know you better. May I call on you some time?"

My heart gave a quick leap at that, and it was a moment or two before I answered. Then I said, "I'd like to have you. I'm at home Tuesday afternoons."

I knew he hadn't meant that he wanted to see me again among a lot of people; but it seemed best not to admit openly that I guessed how he felt.

He understood.

"I'll come," he said.

We went on dancing till young Carleton cut in.

"Well, I see you hooked Trent," Jack said, as we drove home. "Nice work. Did you get far enough along to ask him to dinner?"

"Don't be so raw," I said with an edge on my voice. "I didn't hook him. We met and we danced. He may come around to tea some Tuesday afternoon."

"Why be so touchy?" Jack asked. "You've done a good job. Now I've got a chance to sell Trent's the Dulcima property."

"Is that all you ever think of—selling something to somebody?" I asked bitingly.

Jack had an irritating way of whistling between his teeth when rubbed the wrong way. He did it now.

"Well," he said dryly, "I don't see that you have any kick coming. You always get your commission. That mink coat you're wearing, now. That came with the Stokes-Barre sale. Didn't I hear you pining for a new sports roadster? If I sell Dulcima to Trent's, you can pick your own make."

"You make me sick," I flared out. "I don't believe we've got a friend that you care two cents for on his own account. I'd rather wear a ten-year-old coat and walk than have to look on every new acquaintance as a prospect."

"Oh, yeah?" Jack said. "I can see you doing it." He began to whistle through his teeth again.

I opened my mouth to snap something back at him, but closed it again. After all, wasn't he right? Hadn't I helped him put over any number of sales—by being nice to his prospects? And hadn't he always given me something that I wanted, from the proceeds?

In fact, hadn't our twelve years of marriage been pretty much a frank business partnership? Had I any right to turn on him now? Also, did I want him to know that Graydon Trent had stirred feelings in me that I hadn't had since that day long ago when I had fallen in love with Jerry Drake, my first husband?

I looked back over the years bitterly. Love! Yes, that was what I had thought it when Jerry leaned out of his

smoking racer after finishing first in the five-hundred-mile classic at Indianapolis and drew me into his grimy arms, thereby telling the world that he was going to marry me.

Love! Was it? Or wasn't it? What was love, anyway?

If to thrill from head to foot at a man's touch, to think of him from one end of the day to another, to listen raptly to every word he said, was love, I had been in love with Jerry Drake.

But that had been eighteen years ago. I was just a romantic girl then. To be noticed by the handsome race-track daredevil had turned my head.

I thought swiftly back over Jerry's whirlwind courtship—the first breath-taking ride in his red demon of a car—the long climb up the Laguna Mountain road with Jerry chuckling every mile or so because the demon took the grades in high—the coming out on that flat place at the top overlooking the puple and gold of Imperial Valley six thousand feet below, extending into haze-smothered distance—then Jerry's arms around me, his lips on mine, the sudden leap and throb of my heart, the burning of passion in me that matched his own—the utter giving of myself to him there on that mountain top.

Yes, that had seemed like love. But had it been love? How long had it lasted?. Six weeks of ecstatic passion which left us both drained dry and puzzled at our own lack of feeling. Occasional flare-ups of the passion, lasting two or three days, separated by long periods of indifference—Jerry called it being "in neutral." Finally the knowledge that Jerry didn't want to get out of "neutral." He wanted to get out of our marriage. He no longer loved me.

Had he ever loved me really? Had there ever been anything but fierce animal passion between us?

JACK swung the car into our driveway, let me out at the front door, and drove on to the garage. I went in and up to my room.

Jack came in, humming. When he hummed, I knew he was in a good humor, just as I knew he was irritated when he whistled between his teeth. He was generally in a good humor. That was why our marriage had lasted twelve years without a pretense of love. Jack never carried a grouch. We could disagree. We could quarrel. We could tell each other what we thought of each other. And as far as Jack went, that ended it. He still liked me, still wanted me for a pal, still trusted me as a working partner, and took it for granted that I felt the same about him, with the result that, though slower to come around after a quarrel, I always did come around.

I heard him go into the pantry, and I knew he was going to mix up some drinks. I knew what that meant. That was the way the physical side of our marriage always began; drinks, buzzing head, Jack's infectious gayety, laughter, relaxed feeling, a little whirl or two of spontaneous dancing, while Jack sang; then his lips on mine—not roughly, not tenderly—just gayly and persistently, till something in me responded and I gave him back kiss for kiss. After that, the slow, tantalizing, ever more stirring game of passion that brought final willing surrender.

That was perhaps what had held Jack and me together for so long, though there was no tenderness between us. I never became his wife, accepted and taken for granted. I was rather an accessible woman companion who could be wooed and won, temporarily, whenever he felt like it. He never assumed any rights. All he assumed was mutual good will—and eventual response.

So far—because he never acted as if he owned me, and because these times of physical love-making came only at intervals—I had indeed always responded. In fact, being honest, I am going to admit that I should have felt something missing in my life without those gay wooings, those impersonal episodes of passion.

But now, as the clink of ice in the cocktail shaker came up the stairs and through my open door, I had a moment of revulsion. I wanted no stirring of the physical in me. I wanted no drink, no buzzing head, no kisses, no love-making. I wanted myself to myself.

I felt something stiffen like iron within me. I closed my door and began to undress. A moment later, I heard Jack coming up the stairs.

"Hello!" he called outside my door. "Open up. I've got the makings."

With great care to make my voice just right in its casualness, I answered, "No, thanks. I don't feel like any more drinks. I'm tired and I'm going right to bed."

THERE was a short silence. Then his voice, partly puzzled, partly quizzical, "O.K." A pause. "Pleasant dreams!" and that whistling between the teeth as he went back down the stairs again.

I sat down on the edge of my bed staring at the black satin point of my dancing slipper.

The following Tuesday, as I checked over our Japanese boy's preparations for my afternoon "at home," I found that I was strangely keyed up. I tried to laugh at myself, but I couldn't get rid of the tight feeling of expectancy—hope, doubt. Would Graydon Trent come to carry forward the acquaintance? Or would he have forgotten those moments of amazing understanding that we had shared at Mrs. West's dinner party?

I told myself repeatedly that I was being childish; that I was an old married woman; that I ought to have more sense. But I continued to be excited; and, as the bell rang again to admit guests, without Graydon Trent's turning up, I felt a queer sickening feeling of unhappiness inside me, which all my smiling chatter to my visiting friends could not make me forget.

And then, when the numbers were beginning to thin out, he came, fresh-faced and eager, yet just a little shy, as if he were in his twenties instead of the forty-one that *Who's Who* had told me he was, when I looked him up.

"I was afraid I'd be too late," he said, as I poured him some tea. "I've been over at the office all afternoon having a star chamber meeting with my uncles." His eyes sparkled. "I got the best of it, too, for once."

Our eyes were meeting and that curious sense of sympathetic understanding had come to life between us again.

"Good!" I said. "What was it all about?"

The color in his face deepened for a moment.

"Oh, I was arguing for a pet scheme of mine," he said. "You see, we're just getting ready to start putting up a new factory, and the plan is to have it so far from any town that the land will cost practically nothing, the workers can have equally low rents, and we can save a lot of overhead. Of course my uncles' idea was to put up a lot of good old-fashioned cottages that can be built by the hundred, all on the same pattern, and set them all in a compact section within easy walking distance of the plant. We'll rent them to the workers and control them pretty well that way; of course running a big company store too."

"And what's the matter with that idea?" I asked. "What do you want to do instead?"

"I've trained in architecture," he said, "and especially town planning. I want to make a model town of it, one that will draw steady employees who care something for real homes."

"That sounds like good business," I said. "Of course it would be more expensive, but—"

"But the employees would stick, and the labor turnover would be small," he caught me up. "That's just the point, and I finally made them see. I'm to have things my way. And, if the thing works, the old boys may begin to have some faith in me."

A number of people interrupted to say good-bye at that moment, and presently the whole crowd left—except Graydon. He just stayed, sipping his tea as if he had no

intention of going. When we were alone, I sat down in front of our smoldering open fire and he sat on the bench to the right of it.

"So you'd like to make your uncles believe you are fit to direct the tentacles of the octopus?" I asked. "I thought maybe you were glad to be out of it."

"Well," he said, staring into the fire, "I can't help thinking now and then what a lot of power for good a financial octopus might have, a reformed and idealistic octopus."

"It could, couldn't it!" I exclaimed earnestly, seeing his picture, and for the first time in my life really thinking of the importance of other human beings and their happiness. "But could you pay dividends?"

"That's the trouble," he answered. "All our hard-headed directors say 'no.' They think I'm crazy. But I think it could be done. We could pay small dividends, but they'd be steady and safe, if the people who work for us knew that we were giving them all we possibly could. After all, stockholders who do nothing don't really deserve eight and ten per cent, and then stock distributions into the bargain. They ought to be satisfied with three and four, with security against bad times from labor trouble."

I was just going to answer when I heard our front door open and Jack came in. Something tightened up in me and I found myself suddenly self-conscious. But I needn't have been. Jack was humming; and, when he came into the drawing room, he smiled cordially, holding out his hand.

"Glad to find you still here, Trent," he said. "Betty said you might drop in. So I left the office a bit early, hoping to see you." He grinned. "I don't often show up at these teas, but I thought I would, this time."

Graydon laughed appreciatively, and Jack sat down on the opposite side of the fireplace, refusing tea but instead, taking out a cigarette.

"Well," Jack said, "I see that Trent's is doing the smart thing again—laying out the new plant where land costs practically nothing. I wonder that more big firms haven't done it. No sense in sticking to the big cities and loading up with overhead from the start."

"I think it's a good idea," Graydon said thoughtfully. "But I'm afraid I had nothing to do with the scheme. I'm going to lay out the employees' town, though. I was just telling Mrs. Haynes that I'd persuaded the directors to let me have a try at making a model town of it."

"Good work!" Jack said enthusiastically—though I knew that employees' living conditions meant nothing whatever to him. "Now, there's a sensible idea. You'll get a lot of advertising out of that."

"I'll get a lot of satisfaction out of it," Graydon answered. "If I do what I think I can do, it'll not only keep our own employees satisfied, but it will force big companies all over the country to do something like it, and that will have a big effect on the living conditions of labor."

"You said it!" Jack exclaimed. "A lot of money could be saved by doing away with strikes. Give 'em what they want just before they start fighting for it. That's the system."

Graydon smiled at me. When he made no answer, I knew it was because he saw how far Jack was from understanding what was really in his mind; and I knew that his smile meant his belief that I did understand.

I returned the smile. Just then the telephone rang in Jack's library. He excused himself and left us. Graydon turned to me.

"I've been having a working model of the new town made," he said, "and tomorrow I'm having the parts sent over from the drafting rooms to my own studio. I'll be working it over for the next week. Would you be at all interested to see what it's going to be like? You and your husband?"

"I'D love to see it," I told him eagerly. "I don't know about Jack. He's terribly busy. Do you mean I—we could come over and see the model some afternoon?"

"I wish you would," he said. "I'd like to know what you think of my schemes."

I knew that he meant me alone. I knew he cared nothing for Jack's opinion.

"I'll come," I said, "whether Jack can make it or not. I think it's a wonderful idea."

Graydon rose.

"I must be going now," he said. "Make it tomorrow—about four, if you can. I'm crazy to see what you'll think of it."

He stood looking into my eyes, and I back into his. Then Jack's step sounded, and Graydon seemed to break himself away. He was saying good-bye when Jack came in.

After going to the door with him, Jack called to Mashima for some cocktails and came to stand with his back to the fire, looking down at me quizzically.

"Yes, my dear," he said, "you've got him hooked, and you'll have no trouble holding onto him while I land him." He gave me a satisfied smile.

I was about to flare up as I had done the night before, but caught myself just in time. Jack would be keen enough to see that something had happened in me—something that I hardly dared admit and yet couldn't hide from myself any longer.

I flicked the ashes from my cigarette onto the hearth and hoped that my voice would be even as I answered.

"How long before you start working on him openly?" I asked. "He's offered to show us the model of his new town tomorrow. Will you go with me to his studio? Or do you want me to go alone to look at it?"

He grinned down at me.

"Go alone, my dear," he said. "Finish the job. I'll call on him at his office the next day about the Dulcima."

I shivered a little and closed my eyes. I had suddenly begun to hate Jack and hate myself—to hate our whole partnership. But I didn't want Jack to read my feelings in my eyes. If he even suspected how I felt—

Mashima brought the cocktails, and I drank mine slowly while Jack told me enthusiastically of a new property in Canada that he had heard of and meant to look up. It was aluminum this time. He thought there was a fortune in it; even thought of putting some of our own money into it, enough anyway to draw him a real slice of the profits in addition to his commission.

I let him talk but hardly heard him. I was seeing Graydon's lean, eager face again and wondering bitterly why I

"You went out to Trent's studio this afternoon," he said fiercely. "Yes, I did," I flashed back, "and then I went to dinner with him afterwards. We danced awhile, and—"

could not have met him before I had begun to make what now suddenly struck me as a mess out of my life. With a man like that I—but then Jack broke in on my thoughts:

"So we'll probably be starting in about a week. You'll want to get plenty of warm sport clothes. There'll be a lot of roughing it, and Canada's cold this time of year."

I was suddenly filled with dismay—dismay and revolt. Go away from Washington! Leave, when for the first time in my life I had met a man who—

"I guess you'll have to get along without me this time," I said, trying to keep my voice steady and casual. "Snow and cold don't seem to appeal to me."

He began to whistle through his teeth.

"Hm-m," he said. "So we've got a new interest in life. And with me in Canada, what a grand chance to follow up the interest!"

My instinct was to flash out a denial of his accusation, but something held me back. What he said was true; and that new interest suddenly seemed to me the most important thing that had ever come into my life or could come into it. I drank off the remains of my cocktail and looked up at him defiantly.

"I intend to follow up any interest that comes into my life whether you are here or in Canada," I said. "You've had plenty of *new interests* in the last dozen years. Why shouldn't I?"

His square jaw set and his black eyes grew hard as he stared down at me.

"Don't forget I'm your bread and butter," he said meaningly. "Don't forget what you were when I picked you up in Rio twelve years ago."

I couldn't help a tightening inside me at that, but I still met his eyes defiantly.

"I'm not forgetting," I said. "But don't forget, yourself, that I've played the game. I'm not the only one that's better off now."

Some of his tenseness seemed to leave him. He lighted a cigarette and leaned back against the fireplace.

"ALL right," he said. "Suppose we admit that. We've done well by each other. But you might just as well understand that I'm not sharing my interest in you with anybody else. You try taking on a lover, and I'm done with you."

I jumped up.

"That's just about your level!" I cried furiously. "Take on a lover! You would think of it that way, because that's your way. Well, don't worry. It's not going to be mine."

He didn't move, but blew smoke slowly into the air.

"Well," he said sarcastically, "that's a comfort. We'll have our new interest, but not make a lover of him. Good! No scandal. No dirt. Just nice platonic friendship." He smiled deliberately into my face. "How interesting! Give him my regards tomorrow. It ought not be hard to sell him the Dulcima now."

He continued to smile provokingly at me. I didn't know what to say or do. I felt that I had been forced into saying too much already. I glared at him a moment in helpless rage. Then I turned and left the room.

Upstairs I locked my door, not because I expected Jack to follow and bother me, but because I wanted to feel alone, completely my own. The turning of that key helped me.

I sat down on my bed and smiled grimly. What a stupid to-do! Jack and I were quarreling as to whether I should have Graydon for a lover! And Graydon was cheerfully going about his business with no more thought of such a thing than the man in the moon!

A crazy situation. Yes, of course, I had to admit that a spark had jumped between Graydon and me; I had to admit this had lit something in me; that he suddenly interested me more than any man in the world had ever interested me. I had to admit that he seemed interested on his part. I'd seen enough of men to know that he wouldn't have come to my tea—wouldn't have talked as he had—if he hadn't been interested.

But Graydon was plainly a bachelor from choice, and I was a married woman—twice married, and practically forty. Romances didn't grow out of such situations. My period of romance was over. I had made a mess out of it. It was finished long ago. It had been finished even before Jack had picked me up out of that café in Rio where I was desperately trying to earn enough for my passage back to the United States by singing—and by dancing with the patrons, and equally desperately trying to avoid earning more than I needed by going beyond the singing and dancing.

FOR a while Jack had thought he was really in love with me. He must have, or he wouldn't have married me. But I had never loved him—not even as I had loved Jerry, with a short-lived passionate flame. I had been grateful to him for lifting me out of the mess that I had got myself into by going as a paid hostess on Jay Cary's yacht and deserting at Rio because I couldn't stand the pressure that one of his guests was putting on me. I had been glad of the security that my new marriage had given me, glad of the easy-going companionship of my sociable but hard-headed husband, even content with his occasional physical wooings. But life had become a routine with no pull toward the future, no expectation of keener happiness to come.

And now I had met a man who stirred something in me that neither Jerry's passion nor Jack's good fellowship had stirred. He made me feel that there was still something wonderful and desirable in the world that I had not yet touched. He made me feel that, in contact with him, even my own hard-boiled spirit could soften and freshen into something better and more satisfying. And the quick understanding that had shown itself between us from the moment our eyes had met, gave me that eager conviction that I could mean something real to him that he had never found in a woman before. The thought that this shy, boyish, idealistic man who had passed the age of forty without attaching himself to a woman should want my companionship and understanding—as Graydon plainly did—was strangely and sweetly stirring.

But I was married. Definitely married. Twice married. How could I ever come to mean anything real in Graydon's life? No man with his ideals, once he came to know anything about my past, could want to pass over the boundary of mere acquaintanceship with me. No doubt some willing gossip would tell him and he would drop me. Certainly he couldn't fall in love with me.

Still, I remembered his eyes on mine, so eager, so frankly expectant of understanding, so anxious for my interest. Wouldn't even friendship with him mean more in my life than any other relationship had ever meant?

I knew suddenly and definitely that it would. I knew that I would do all in my power to help that

friendship to develop. I knew that nothing Jack could say or do would stop me. And I made up my mind from that minute forward to hold myself to the kind of ideals and standards that Graydon would want in a friend. Never mind if he didn't fall in love with me. Perhaps better that he shouldn't. If he could like me and believe in me and come to me for understanding and encouragement in his schemes to make something better than an octopus out of Trent's, Incorporated, there would be plenty of happiness for me in that.

I took a deep, satisfied breath and began to change for dinner. I felt that I knew for once where I was going and could be happy in my choice of direction.

A hot and cold shower made me feel more young and alive than I had felt in years. I caught myself looking into my mirror long before I was ready to put on my make-up, just to see if I looked as much like a girl as I felt.

No, I didn't look like a girl. But I didn't look over thirty-five. There wasn't a streak of white anywhere in my dark hair. There were no wrinkles around the corners of my eyes. There was neither the beginning of a double chin nor any sagging looseness of the skin of my neck. I might be nearly forty, but I didn't feel it, and I didn't look it, and I wasn't going to think it. I was going to think of myself as being just as young as I then felt.

And I was thrilled with my own resolution, singing in my heart with the new color that life had taken on.

THERE was a little stiffness between Jack and me as we drove to the Calverts' for dinner, but it soon wore off. I have already said that Jack never remembered unpleasantness long. Before we reached Calverts', he was quite his usual genial, confident self. No doubt he had examined the situation with his hard-headed, matter-of-fact mind and decided that by no possibilty could anything come of it. Then he had put it aside and really forgotten it.

At half past three the next afternoon, I was ready and waiting for Graydon, and feeling almost as trembly as I had felt twenty years before, when Jerry had first begun to take me out.

Graydon's healthy face shone with frank pleasure as he greeted me.

"You don't know what a boost this gives me," he said when we had settled down in his inexpensive little roadster. "I've never before really felt that anybody caught the idea of what I want to do with one of my schemes."

"They're all so busy making money that they can't understand how anybody can be busy trying to do something worthwhile with it," I said.

"That's just it," he agreed. "But it seems to me there's a whole lot more fun in . . ." and all the rest of the way to his studio he talked of what he would like to do with the huge Trent capital, if he were managing it. "Of course I'd have to see that the family and other stockholders got a safe income," he finished, as we stopped and he helped me out, "but it would certainly be a satisfaction to know that the men and women who really earned that money for the stockholders got enough out of it themselves to live decently and happily."

I heard his words and in the back of my mind I thought how different he was from all the other men with money that I had met; but it was his hand under my arm that really affected me. He hardly touched me. Yet my blood seemed to grow warmer through my whole body, and it fairly throbbed with happiness as we went shoulder to shoulder up the long flight of stairs to the big barnlike studio, under the roof.

As we entered the room, I gave an involuntary cry of amazed delight. In the center of it, just under the big skylights, was a huge table, twenty feet square or more, and on it a town in miniature, the factory in the center, and blocks of tiny houses spread out over the rest of it, standing not more than an inch high. It was Graydon's model town.

My exclamation made his grey eyes shine happily. When I went close to the table he came and stood right beside me, as if to bask in my admiration.

"It's wonderful," I breathed—and still was conscious of his shoulder touching mine. "Is that the way towns are planned—with little toy houses?"

He laughed.

"They're not toy houses. They're scale models. The real houses will be just like them in appearance and will stand in just the same positions and have just the same proportions of land around them. They'll even be painted the same color."

"But they're all different," I said. "Isn't that terribly expensive?"

"No," he said eagerly. "That's the point. They don't cost one per cent more than it would to build them all alike. You see, there are really only twelve different models, but we place duplicates in different positions on the house lots, we paint them different colors, paper them differently inside, and keep them as far as possible from one another. The owners will all feel that they have homes different from everybody else's."

"They'll like that, won't they?" I cried, and suddenly found that I was looking straight into his eyes and had all but forgotten what we were talking about, hardly even heard his answer. What nice eyes they were! And shining so with enthusiasm! And now looking so steadily into mine.

I felt things quiver in me, and pulled my eyes back to the big table and its model town.

"You don't seem to have it laid out systematically in blocks," I said, trying to be practical. "The streets are all curved and the blocks irregular. It doesn't look like a city."

"I don't want it to," he said quickly. "It's a group of homes, not a city. The streets are curved and the blocks irregular because curves are more attractive than straight lines, and variety is better than monotony. And look. There are no cross streets, just entering streets. There can't be any speeding autos to run over children and old people."

I looked and saw that he was right. It would be hard for a car to go more than twenty miles an hour among those streets of homes. Then a thought struck me.

"Why don't you put a little playground in the center of each block?" I asked. "Cut off a small piece of each back yard. Then the small children would never need to be on the streets."

HE gave me a quick, enthusiastic look. "That's the very idea I needed!" he cried. "We'll do it. Children are the most important part of any family. We'll provide for them. We'll put a central playground in every block. We'll enlarge the scale of the street layout to provide for that. Yes, and every dozen blocks we'll have one vacant, to be used as a playground for the bigger children. This town will be built for children—and it will satisfy their parents so well that they'll never want to quit their jobs. They'll stick."

Again he was looking at me with shining eyes.

The flutter in me was changing into a steady, happy glow. I asked about schools, library, motion picture theatre, and so on. He pointed them out. We tried different locations. We considered the advantages of one big school or several small ones. Most of these things Graydon had settled the best way himself already, but every now and then some idea of mine made him decide on a change, and I would have an extra throb of happiness. For the first time in my life I felt as if I were having a real part in something that counted.

Suddenly Graydon pulled out his watch and gave an exclamation of amazement.

"Do you know it's seven o'clock?" he said. "You'll be late getting home. I'm sorry. I've been so hot on these ideas of yours, I forgot the time." Again he smiled boyishly.

"It doesn't matter," I said. "Jack is dining with a prospect. I'll just telephone Mashima that I'll be late, and—"

"Would you dine with me?" he asked quickly, his voice all at once lower and earnest. "It's wonderful to talk—about things—with you."

Our eyes were meeting again—and saying things.

"All right," I told him. "I—I'd love to."

I was uncomfortably conscious that we were doing something decidedly unconventional in thus dining together, but I wouldn't have turned back for anything. To me Graydon had come to mean a doorway into something new and fine in life, something far more important than the mere fact that he stirred me with his nearness. I suppose I must have met men before who had high ideals and were eager to carry them out; but he was the first who had opened the door and let me look in, and he had done it in such a way as to make me feel that my going through that doorway and joining him at least in spirit would help him. To be allowed to share that eager enthusiasm of his seemed to me the most wonderful thing that had ever come into my life, and I wasn't going to let any scruples about convention keep me from that experience.

We drove out some thirty miles on the Baltimore road and turned off half a mile to a gay inn where there were both good food and dancing. On the way out we kept on talking about the new model factory town, and even after we had sat down, we talked about it. But, when Graydon had given the order and the orchestra struck up, the gleam of enthusiasm in his eye softened. He turned to me.

"Will you dance with me?" he asked quietly; not casually or with easy assurance, but as if it really meant something to him.

And I found my own voice queerly subdued as I said, "Yes, I'd like to." The stepping into his arms had the same sweet thrill about it that I would have had in submitting to a definite caress. I was dreamy with happiness all through that dance; and, when we sat once more opposite each other in our little booth, the meeting of his eyes with mine made me feel I was again giving myself to a caress.

Strangely, we talked but little now. It seemed easier to eat and to look at one another. Between courses we danced in silence. When the meal was ended, we still sat, not speaking. Yet it seemed to me that we had said a hundred intimate and confiding things with no words clothing them. I knew what had happened to me; and meeting his eyes, I could not doubt that the same thing had happened to him. I held my breath as I thought how short a time I had known him and yet how sure I was that he was the only man in the world who could ever mean anything to me.

A lump hardened in my throat. I had remembered Jack; his having told me to get acquainted with Graydon, his satisfaction in my having "hooked" the fish, his confidence that he would now land him, selling his firm the Dulcima mine, his continuing purpose to make that sale, even though he suspected the state of my mind. I felt suddenly ashamed, and impulsively I began to speak.

"I'm going to ask you to do something for me," I said in a tight voice.

"I'll do it," he said quickly. "What is it?" His eyes were warmly eager.

I hesitated. Then I said haltingly, "I think—I'm practically certain—that Jack is going to try to interest you in buying some mining property. I—I don't want you to buy it."

An uncomfortable look came over his face.

"Do you mean that the property's no good?" he asked.

I shook my head. "No. It's—I guess it's very good. Jack seldom makes a mistake about things like that," I said.

"Then why?"

"It's hard to—to say it," I said, suddenly finding it difficult to bring out the words, "but I—it's like this: often Jack has asked me to help him make his sales by—by getting acquainted with the right people. He asked me to get acquainted with you for that reason. I was looking for you—for that reason—at the West's dinner. But—now—"

His eyes grew earnest, with just a touch of dread in them. Then the dread left them, and they were just more earnest.

"But this—our afternoon—our evening—have been real, haven't they?" he said quietly.

"Yes, they have, absolutely real," I said. "There hasn't been anything else, since I first found you looking across the table at me that night."

He sat looking at me. I found my eyes filling with tears. I blinked them away. He smiled.

"Well, that's all right then," he said.

"And you won't buy from Jack?" I asked a bit tremulously.

"Why not?" he asked. "If it's a good property."

I bit my lip. How could I tell him that this thing that had come between us meant too much to have it tainted by business?

"I'd feel happier—if you didn't," I said with a painful and weary effort at last.

Something came into his eyes then that I couldn't quite face. I lowered my own eyes quickly.

"I think I understand," he said gently. "No. I won't buy the property if—your husband offers to sell it to me."

"Your husband!" The words made things tighten up more than ever within me. Yes, Jack was my husband. I was tied to him. I had no real right to be sitting there with Graydon, falling deeper and deeper in love with him every minute.

"Thank you," I choked out, so low that I hardly heard the words myself. Then: "I think you'd better take me home now."

"All right", he said simply, but his words had the same tenderness in them that had made me unable to meet his eyes a moment before.

We talked only a little on the way home, and then only on safe, impersonal subjects. When I turned at my door to say good-bye, he took my hand and held it while he said, "I'm going to see you again soon."

I looked up into his face, troubled and shaken with the poignant realization of what had happened between us.

"Yes," I said finally, and swallowed hard.

But the choking sensation was still there as I watched him step down to his car with that boyish buoyancy of his and drive off with his head high.

I had just sat down before the open fire when Jack came in. He was humming cheerfully. I heard him call to Mashima for cocktails. Then he came in and sat down opposite me. He seemed to have forgotten completely that we had quarreled the night before.

"Well," he said, "I've got Stanley interested in the aluminum idea. He owns a lot of stock in Amalgamated Airways, you know, and they plan to triple the amount of duralumin they use next year. He's got his ear to the ground all right. Great fellow to talk business with. Interested in Dulcima too."

"Good!" I said, trying to act as if I too had forgotten our quarrel, though my heart was still thumping fast from

ny thoughts of Graydon Trent, who was the cause of it.

"Yes," Jack went on cheerfully, "it looks as if I'd make . nice fat profit, one way or the other."

Mashima came in with the cocktail shaker and glasses, etting them down on an end table beside the sofa. Jack ame over and poured them.

"Well," he said, "here's to us!"

My heart was tightening. How often I had heard that oast of his, and drunk it with him, at the beginning of one of his gay and impersonal wooings. I knew so well what vas coming.

What was I going to do? I didn't want him to guess ıbout Graydon, and yet . . .

I took the cocktail, held it up to him, trying to smile ıaturally, clinked glasses, and drank it off. He grinned :heerfully.

"I believe Mashima mixes 'em better than I do," he said, ınd started pouring another glassful for each of us. I vould have stopped him, but I wasn't quick enough. I was ;till not sure in my mind what I was going to do, and frantic with my own uncertainty. Jack sat down and began drinking his second glass, savoring it with each mouthful, ınd talking about his promising conversation with Stanley. I sipped at my own. If only I could think of some way :o turn his mind from me and the love-making that I knew was in his thoughts.

BUT I could think of nothing. I could only go on sipping my cocktail, nodding and smiling as he gleefully emphaıized each step with which he had won Stanley over, and quivering inwardly with my tense fear of what was coming.

When he turned on the radio and began switching from station to station for dance music, I grew cold all over. But when he came and pulled me to my feet to dance, I still didn't know what I was going to do.

The effect of the two stiff cocktails was beginning to creep over me now, and I hated it. But I forced myself to dance, still racking my brains for some way out that wouldn't betray my secret and yet would save me from what I knew I couldn't endure.

He had his face down beside mine now. With an effort I kept from drawing away.

"We make a good pair of partners, don't me?" he chuckled. "A good steady team. Pull together when there's work to do, mind our own business most of the time, have our little fling when the spirit moves. I wouldn't swap you, my dear, not for anything."

He stopped dancing as the announcer identified his station. Then he found my lips, unhurried, confident, not yet passionate, but purposeful.

I tried to stand it. I tried to tell myself that it didn't matter, that it had happened a hundred times before, that for the sake of peace I must endure it again. But suddenly my revulsion at the touch of his smooth, sensation-seeking lips became too much for me. I wrenched out of his arms, and walked away, rubbing my mouth with the back of my hand.

For a minute he didn't speak. Then he said, "Well, I'll be damned. What's the matter?"

"I don't feel like being kissed," I answered sharply.

He began to whistle between his teeth and helped himself to another drink. Then he came and stood near me, looking at me keenly.

"You don't feel like being kissed?" he repeated slowly. "Or is it that you don't feel like being kissed by me? Perhaps you've had your fill of kisses already?"

A cold kind of fury had hold of me. I looked back straight into his eyes.

"I have," I said. "But not the way you mean. That one you just started filled me up."

I turned and started out of the room, but he caught my arm roughly and pulled me around.

"Wait a minute," he said fiercely. "You went out to Trent's studio this afternoon." His grip on my arm hurt.

"Yes, I did," I flashed back, "and then I went to dinner with him afterwards. We danced awhile, and—"

"And he made love to you."

"And he did *not* make love to me."

We stood staring at one another. Maybe *glaring* would describe it better. I felt that this was the finish between Jack and me. I hoped it was. I wasn't going to dodge it.

Suddenly he began to laugh; laugh heartily, genuinely. Then, while I stared at him, he released my arm, gave me a good-natured slap on the shoulder, and poured himself another drink, still laughing.

"After all," he said, "why should I kick? I do it. You probably know that. Why shouldn't you have a little fun yourself? Just watch your step. That's all I ask. Watch your step. No scandal, you know."

He chuckled again, tossed off his drink, and left the room. A moment later he stuck his head in from the hall, grinning. He had his hat and coat on.

"But *I still feel like kissing somebody,*" he said. "So long! See you tomorrow."

And he went out, leaving me numb with the whirl of my emotions.

Then, as the meaning of his final words penetrated to my understanding, I found myself growing cold and hard with disgust and anger. Strange to say, I had never thought to suspect that the reason Jack demanded so little of me and took his love-making with such gay casualness was because there were common, easy women in his life. Now it was suddenly clear. I felt horribly cheapened.

And it fairly sickened me when I realized that he had given me permission to follow his example—so long as there was no scandal! I shuddered.

And then I found that I had stopped shuddering and was thinking of myself in Graydon's arms—with Graydon my lover; and the picture was sweet, so sweet that I held it close and drew a long breath of joy in it.

But suddenly I was ashamed again. I told myself that this thing between Graydon and me was too fine and wonderful to be soiled by yielding to mere physical loverhood.

Divorce! I had faced it once. I could face it again if Graydon loved me and wanted me. And he did, didn't he? He hadn't said it with words; but he'd said it with his eyes and the tones of his voice.

But would he feel the same after I had gone through the scandal of the divorce court? Could he think of me as anything but a much-stained piece of goods, secondhand—no, thirdhand when I came to him! Could I go through with it all, only to find his eyes no longer tender, his soul no longer reaching out to mine?

I couldn't bear that. No, I couldn't risk that. Better to keep his friendship. Better to get all the decency and idealism and gentleness that he would give me than to spoil it all and offer myself, tarnished, to him.

I went to bed with my mind clear, partly unhappy at what I knew I must put aside, but still mostly happy about what I believed I could still keep.

AT two the next afternoon my telephone rang. When I answered it, Graydon's voice came, clear but strained.

"Can I see you right away?" he asked. "It's important."

"Why—why, yes," I faltered. Already my heart was pounding.

"I'll be right over," he said. "We'll drive. Is that all right?"

"Yes," I told him wonderingly. "Yes. I'll be ready."

Then I flew upstairs like a schoolgirl to freshen up and put on another outfit. He rang my bell just as I finished dressing.

His face was set, with nothing boyish about it, his eyes troubled. I wondered what could have happened. Had Jack . . .

"Let's not talk till we get out of here," he said tautly as

Again and again Graydon drew me into his arms, his lips on mine far sweeter than in any dream

he started the car. I noted his face, strangely set, stern.

"All right," I answered, hardly above a whisper; and I sat silent and pretty well bewildered as he headed the car out of the city.

We had nearly reached the outskirts before he spoke again.

"I want to talk to you alone, where we can't be interrupted—by anything," he said, and his voice was solemn.

I said "yes" and he went on driving in silence. After another long time he swung into a side road and stopped where trees grew along the bank of the river. The day was mild. We got out and he led the way through the bare woods to a secluded bend in the river. Then he stopped and faced me.

At last, when everything was packed, I went tensely to the telephone. As in a fog, I began to dial

"I did what you'll have a right to say was a mad, unpardonable thing an hour ago," he said, his face still set, but his eyes troubled rather than stern. "I've got to tell you about it."

Again I could only say "yes?" in a scared voice, and wait.

"YOUR husband came to me." My heart contracted at that. Oh, what could Jack have said to him! I waited. "He wanted to sell me that mining property you spoke of. I had to let him tell me about it. He's a good salesman. I could see that the thing had possibilities. But I turned him down. He wanted to know why. And all at once I—I found myself telling him the truth."

I caught my breath.

"You told him that I had asked you not to?"

"No. I said, 'Because I'm in love with your wife, if you must know'."

He stopped speaking. A wave of dizziness swept over me. Then I found myself looking up into his eyes. They were humble and pleading.

"It's true," he said huskily. "I haven't been able to think of a thing but you since I first saw you looking across the table at me. I love you. I didn't mean to make trouble for you. I meant to keep it to myself and be satisfied with your friendship. But all at once it came out. I said it."

He looked down at me with something like desperation in his eyes now. I couldn't take mine from them. I couldn't speak. I found my lips twisting and tears starting under my eyelids.

Suddenly I covered my face with my hands, took a step forward, and leaned against his breast, sobbing. His arms went quickly around me, holding me close and steadying my shaking shoulders.

Then his face came down beside mine.

"You—you do love me?" he breathed. "I wasn't wrong, then. Oh, my dear, I was afraid I had been. And yet, I felt just as if we had told each other—last night." How sweet to be in his arms at last!

I looked up at him with still streaming eyes, but I know my face was happy. He bent and kissed me gently, tenderly, and I tried to give him my whole heart with my lips.

It was minutes before I could draw even a little out of his enfolding arms.

"What did Jack say when you told him?" I asked.

Graydon's face grew stern, his eyes flinty.

"He just grinned at me and said he didn't see why that should matter—that I wouldn't be the first man who had bought a mine from him because of loving his wife."

I gave a gasping cry and stared up at him in horror. It was incredible! But he pulled me to him again and held me.

"Don't mind," he said. "I knew it wasn't true. And if it was, it wouldn't be your fault. I should think any man who ever talked with you would be in love with you. How can you help it if it makes them buy mines?"

In spite of myself I began to laugh hysterically. He held onto me and finally I grew steady again.

"What—what did you say to him?" I asked.

"I didn't say anything. I was too mad. I—" he stopped

a moment, smiled quizzically. "I knocked him down."

"You knocked him down?" I cried. "But—but he's—"

"I know. He's a big brute. But I guess he didn't know how mad I was. Anyway I knocked him down. Then the funny thing happened. He got up, white as a sheet, but not licked. He said, 'I guess I had that coming to me. Betty's square. I shouldn't have said what I did.' Then he got red in the face and went on, 'But nobody's ever taken a sock at me yet and got away with it.' Then he came for me with blood in his eye, and I—I had to knock him out."

I drew back and stared at him. He and Jack, fighting!

He laughed uncomfortably; he seemed highly embarrassed.

"I'm sorry," he said. "There really wasn't anything else to do. If I hadn't, he'd have beaten me up. It wasn't fair, maybe, because I've boxed so much. But I had no time to think."

Again I began to laugh hysterically, and this time I guess I was really unnerved. I couldn't stop for a long time. When finally I did, it was because Graydon had me in his arms again, pleading with me and kissing me, till everything but him passed from my consciousness.

Kind Martha's hand gripped mine. "You ain't 'lowed ter walk out lak dat," she said with gentle firmness

A long time after that we walked slowly back to his car. But after we got in, he didn't start it immediately.

"Now," he said, "we've got to figure out what we're going to do."

A sinking feeling swept over me, the thought of how little of the problem had been settled by Graydon's strange but sweet declaration of his love. I was still Jack's wife.

"You'll have to get a divorce," Graydon was saying quietly. "Probably Reno's the best place. They do it pretty simply there, I'm told. Do you mind very much?"

It came over me that he didn't know I had already been divorced once. It made me shudder. I found my lip quivering as I faced him.

"I've been divorced there once already," I said, trying to keep my voice steady. "Maybe you won't want me to bother, when you know the ugly part of my life."

I could see his eyes widen with pain. But they grew tender again. He reached over and took my hand.

"Dear," he said, "I love you. I believe in you. I trust you. I want to marry you and have you by me for the rest of my life. Will you do it?"

He kissed my hand and laid his cheek against it. Then he looked at me, waiting for my answer.

I laid my head against his shoulder and gave a long, satisfied sigh.

"Yes," I said with my full heart. "I'll marry you and I'll stay by you and be true to you because I love you and I've never loved anybody else this way. This is the real beginning of life for me."

He put his arms around me, and held me close, with his head against the top of mine.

Finally he said, "You'll think I'm queer, but I don't want you to go home at all. I want you to take a plane for Reno tonight. As far as I'm concerned, you're my responsibility from this minute. I'll get money and the plane reservations. You can buy the clothes you need to start with. You can get the rest after you get there. You're out of the old life for good now."

I started to protest, but he tightened his arm around me.

"Please," he said earnestly.

"All right," I whispered. "I'll do whatever you say."

I was frightened by the bigness of the step, but I was thrilled too, and my heart was singing, while my blood pounded and thumped in my veins.

Driving back into the city, we talked over details, and then went planning on and on into the future—a sweet and wonderful future of comradeship and love. He took me to a hotel, left me to plan and buy what I needed, and went to get the reservation for me on the plane that would take me to Reno. I went to my room and sat down in a kind of daze, trying to keep myself believing that it was all real that I was through with Jack, through with all the old life for good, that only a few months lay between me and happiness that would last the rest of my life.

I say I tried to keep myself believing. That was it. I tried; but in spite of all my trying there kept creeping into my mind a conviction that it couldn't be true, that something was bound to creep in to smash the picture, that all this happiness couldn't come in a single sweep of Graydon's magic wand.

But I did board the plane that night—after being taken tenderly into Graydon's arms for a brief moment at the airport. And I did stay quietly in Reno, establishing my residence and getting my divorce. Those were strange months for me, months of living with myself alone—and Graydon's letters, sweet, beautiful, idealistic letters, but sometimes so hungry and passionate that my face burned and my whole being was suffused with longing.

I read a great deal, books that I thought Graydon would like me to read. And I thought, and thought, and thought, trying to dig out all the unworthy things in my character and cast them away. I wanted to go to Graydon somewhere near to being the woman he thought I was.

And then one day in midsummer I was back in Washington again, stepping out of the big plane and into Graydon's arms. It was as if those months had never been, or had been only a dream and here was the reality, just as sweet and wonderful as I had unbelievingly prayed it might be.

He took me to a beautiful new little bungalow in the suburbs that he had bought for me, and there we dined alone together, served by two colored servants he had hired. It was perfect. After dinner we strolled out onto the little rustic porch with the fragrance of the garden in our nostrils while he told me over and over of his love and drew me again and again into his arms to prove to me that it was real, his lips on mine far sweeter than in any dream.

THE only hard thing was his going away, but we told each other that there would soon be no going away, and I went to my perfect little bedroom with only happiness in my heart.

During the next two weeks I shopped or had fittings most of every day, buying everything that I could possibly want, all with Graydon's money. When I would have protested, he checked me earnestly.

"Our hearts are married already, aren't they, dear?" he said. "Then all that is mine is already yours. I have plenty. You must have plenty. Every time I give you money to spend, I am happy. You wouldn't deny me happiness, would you?"

In the evenings we would dine, sometimes at home, sometimes at some gay place where there was music and dancing and perhaps a floor show. At such places, little by little, I met his friends and he met mine. Generally they were nice to us both, but every once in a while some of his friends would be cool in their greetings. This troubled me. I hated to think that I was causing people to look askance at him. But he only laughed.

"Cut them off our list!" he would chuckle. "Conventional old fogies, that's all."

It was more than a week before I realized that I had not met any of his own family, and then it came to me with a sinking of the heart. Was it as bad as that? Was I cutting him off from his own?

He saw by my face that something was wrong and demanded to know the truth, and I told him, demanding in return the truth from him. He gave it to me tenderly, but very cheerfully, as if the facts made no difference to him.

"It's the divorce part of it," he said. "They're a stiff-necked bunch of loving but proud old mossbacks. There has never been a divorce in the Trent family and no Trent has ever married a divorced woman. Well—" he smiled happily and lovingly—"one is going to in just about ten days. And, if the family doesn't like it, it can go hang."

He reached across the table and covered my hand with his. I tried to smile back, but something was cold and unhappy inside me.

"Now, listen," he said. "The family is crazy, and they're going to find it out. Just give them time. Why, you're actually helping me to be what they want. I'm showing business sense at last. Uncle John and Uncle Bill even call me in about the doings of the octopus and they take my advice. Before I know it they'll be putting me in charge. That's what you've done for me. Oh, they'll come round. Don't worry, honey. Everything will be all right."

I managed to smile cheerfully. Then I said, "I had an idea you didn't want to direct the dollar-clutching tentacles. Are you getting the fever yourself?"

He smiled and then his eyes grew wistful, and took on a far-away look.

"No," he said, "not the way you mean. But you know, the more I think of our big organization and how far out it reaches over the country, touching every big town, affecting the lives of hundreds of thousands of hard-working men and women, it fills me up full. It doesn't seem as if I could keep out of it. Betty, I could make a hundred thousand people happier, more content with their lot, more cheerful in their work, better citizens—if I could once get full control of Trent's." His voice lowered in a kind of awed way, as he added, "And other octopuses would have to follow our lead. They couldn't help it. I've begun to think of it as a responsibility for the first time, and it gets me, dear. It really gets me."

He paused and his eyes grew tender. "That's what your love has done for me."

I saw him through a blur, and it seemed to me that something inside me was filling me up with the sweetest kind of joy that had ever come to me. The tears spilled over and ran down my cheeks, but I smiled and Graydon smiled back. The "moss-backed" relatives, and all my vague forebodings of their disapproval, were forgotten.

But they didn't stay forgotten. The second morning after that talk of ours, just as I was ready to start out to a fitting on my wedding gown, a big black car drew up before my little bungalow and two men got stiffly out. One was tall and thin. The other was stout and short. As they came up the walk, I saw that they were elderly. On impulse, I went down and opened the door for them myself. They were very formal, and plainly ill at ease.

"Is this Mrs. Haynes?" the tall one asked, looking down his nose at me.

"Yes," I told him, and waited.

He cleared his throat.

"I am William Trent," he said in a deep voice, a little unsteady with age. "This is my cousin, John Trent." He cleared his throat again. "Will you permit us to—er—come in and talk to you?"

FOR a moment I was quite at a loss to know who they were, but in a moment it came to me and a kind of sharp pain went through me. These two were Graydon's Uncle Bill and Uncle John. It was easy to guess that this was no social call. I felt suddenly weak in the knees, and I must have trembled visibly. They looked even more austere than I had imagined.

"Why—why, yes," I faltered. "Please come in."

I led them into the living room and they sat down, holding themselves very straight and very solemn. I waited. There was nothing I could say. Finally the tall one, Uncle Bill, cleared his throat again.

"Mrs. Haynes," he said, "our mission is not a pleasant one. In fact, I may say that it is very distasteful to us. We would have avoided it if that had been possible. Wouldn't we, John?" He looked at his cousin, as if for confirmation.

"Yes, we would," the stout one answered. His voice was high pitched and nervous. "Indeed we would. It's very unpleasant to us, I assure you, but under the circumstances—with so much at stake—there was nothing else for us to do."

"It isn't as if it were just our nephew's private life," Uncle Bill added. "I think we're broad-minded enough to let him manage his own affairs, whatever we might think of the morality of them; but it seems that this can hardly be called an—er—affair any longer. It seems that—er—"

Suddenly I was angry clear through.

"It seems that Graydon means to marry me," I said, an ic coolness in my voice. "Yes, it seems that way."

"Quite so," Uncle Bill said. "And that makes it different."

"Oh, very different," Uncle John said. "In fact we now fe reluctantly compelled, for the sake of the family, to interfere."

Again that sharp pain through my chest. To interfere! Nc just to ignore me or cut me, but to interfere! They meant t try to stop my marriage to Graydon!

I sat down weakly.

Then courage surged up in my heart again. Graydo wouldn't let them interfere. He would tell them to go to th devil, and he would marry me just the same.

"Just what have you in mind?" I asked crisply.

The two looked at one another. Then Uncle Bill spoke.

"We—er—the family have—er—empowered us to make yo an offer that you will hardly—er—feel like refusing," he sai hesitantly.

I gasped.

"You are offering me money not to marry Graydon?" I crie I got up abruptly. "Will you please go?" I said tightly. "Yo have made a big mistake. I'm not interested in money. I happe to love your nephew, and he wants me to marry him. That' all there is to say."

They looked at each other again. Then Uncle Bill said, " don't know whether you understand that Graydon Trent's fo tune—his own private fortune, you know—is far from th millions that Trent's controls. Aside from the trust fund, th income from which—"

"I don't care anything about his fortune!" I cried passion ately. "Now will you please go before I say something that wouldn't like to say to Graydon's uncles?"

Again the looking at each other and again the throat clearing and again Uncle Bill speaking:

"I'm sorry to be compelled to say this, but we have—er—ha your past life looked into, Mrs. Haynes; and we find there are— er—episodes which—er—you would probably not like to hav brought to light. In fact, Mrs. Haynes, I think you will no realize that the best thing for you to do is to take the—er—tw hundred thousand dollars that we are empowered to offer and— er—leave the country."

I WAS shaking with my anger, but I managed to keep contro of myself.

"Listen," I said, my voice quivering, "there is nothing in m life that I am afraid to tell Graydon. I'm not even afraid t have you tell whatever stories your detectives have turned u or made up. Graydon loves me and I love him. If he wants t marry me, I shall marry him; and I don't care whether he ha one cent or a million dollars. Now will you go? Tell him al the nasty stories you want to, and do anything else you wan to do, but please go."

They went. I held the door open for them; so they coul hardly do anything else. Then I set my teeth defiantly an went to my fitting. But I felt sick at heart and soiled—almos as if I had really been the kind of woman the Trent famil thought me.

All day the sordidness of the thing ate at my happiness lik a worm. I wondered whether I should tell Graydon or not. I wanted to, because I wanted to hear his indignation and hi assurance that nothing that those two old uncles of his coul do would keep him from loving me. But I knew it would hur him, and I didn't know what harm it might do to him in respec to their new and growing faith in his ability to manage Trent's If he broke with them, he would be done as far as his big new ambitions went, and I knew how much those new ambition meant to him.

No, I couldn't possibly do it. I couldn't smash things fo the man I loved.

When I met Graydon that afternoon, I gave him a gay an cheerful face, pushing all my unhappiness way back inside. I got him to take me to a lively restaurant and then to a night club. We danced and laughed and made extravagant plans fo our future, far into the night. And I went to bed finally, s weary that I slept.

In the morning, when Martha waked me with a steaming hot tray of breakfast, I was ready to laugh at the whole thing. After all, what did it matter? Graydon loved me. I wasn't marrying those two old uncles of his, I was marrying him.

And then Martha laid the open paper in my hands and I found myself staring at two pictures—one of Graydon, the other of me. Under them a headline shouted:

BLUE BLOOD TO MARRY DIVORCEE

WEALTHY SCION OF PROUD OLD FAMILY TO BE THIRD HUSBAND OF FORMER CABARET DANCER

Family Shocked But Declines to Talk, While Speculation Runs High Among Friends

Graydon Trent, recently become prominent in the management of the huge financial enterprise known as Trent's, Inc., admitted last night that he planned to marry the beautiful twice-divorced Betty Haynes.

When asked about the opposition of his family to the wedding, he declared that his marriage concerned himself alone and refused to comment further. It is known, however, that since learning of the proposed marriage a few days ago, the influential members of the family have been trying to break up the match.

Betty Haynes is said to have met Mr. Trent a little over six months ago, the young aristocrat becoming instantly infatuated with her, with the result that within a week she left her husband, the well-liked mining promoter Jack Haynes and, obviously financed by her wealthy lover, flew to Reno to get her second divorce.

Check-up of Mrs. Haynes's former life shows that she was married to Jerry Drake, then noted racing driver, in 1915, after a whirlwind courtship. Three months later, for reasons best known to himself, he deserted her, and she obtained a divorce

Mrs. Haynes, then known as Betty Drake, appears next as the attractive and vivacious paid hostess on board the yacht of a certain millionaire who was taking a party of friends on a world cruise. It is said that more than one stag member of the party sought her favor and it seemed best for her to be debarked at Rio de Janeiro.

At Rio, Betty Drake was not long in finding an opportunity to capitalize on her admitted charms by singing in a notorious night club, where part of her assignment was to dance with and otherwise entertain the customers. Here she met the daring young promoter of mining projects, Jack Haynes; and once more her acknowledged beauty did its work and won her a husband. Since then Mr. Haynes has prospered; and it is generally conceded among those who know that many of his best sales have come from the continuing allure of his wife's dark eyes and striking beauty.

Washington Society is agog over the idea of a Trent marrying a divorcee. Bets are being made freely as to whether the now thirty-eight-year-old beauty will actually hear those wedding bells, or whether her wealthy fiancé will, under pressure, change his mind at the last minute.

I GREW sicker and sicker as I read that column, with its truths so colored as to make them more damning than outright lies. Oh, what would Graydon think! How could he help but be sickened too—but differently—at the thought of having given his love to a soiled and tarnished woman like the one pictured in that newspaper account!

As I sat there, staring in horror and slowly shriveling up inside with the shame of it all, the telephone rang. Trembling with nervous shock, I picked up the instrument from my bedside table.

"Hello, dear," came Graydon's voice, cheerful as usual but pitched in a lower, more tender key.

"Hello," I answered in a dry, choking voice.

"Oh," he said unhappily, "I'm too late. You've seen the thing. I'm sorry. But don't worry, sweetheart. It doesn't mean a thing. Just meat for the scandal hounds."

"It's horrible," I faltered. "I could die of shame."

"Forget it!" he exclaimed. "I know how you feel, and it's hard. But you know how I feel, sweetheart. I love you. This stuff only makes me feel it more. Listen, dear. Stay at home. Have Martha tell everybody you're out. Tell her not to answer any questions. I'm going to find the bird that started this thing, and make him sorry. I'll see you this afternoon. Cheer up, honey, and good-bye till later."

I said good-bye huskily and put down the receiver. His love coming over the wire to me had put new courage into me; even so, the memory of those newspaper paragraphs still seared me

The telephone and the doorbell began to ring before I was dressed. Again and again I heard Martha's, "No, Miz Haynes ain't home. No, ah don' know nothin' about nothin'." Several times I heard the door shut with a thud on some insistent reporter. Each time it happened, I shuddered.

And then, toward eleven o'clock, looking through the window from far back in the living room, I saw Graydon's two uncles coming up the path again. I had a sickening panic; and then, without knowing why, I went to the door myself and let them in. The sight of them had moved me to a cold fury.

"Well," I said bitingly when I had led them into the living room, "you've done a beautiful job of smearing. You must feel quite proud."

"We're shocked, Mrs. Haynes," Uncle Bill said with simple sincerity, quite different from his manner of the day before. "We had nothing to do with those newspaper stories. That is—I'm afraid that the man we hired to investigate your past has betrayed us. He probably saw a chance to make money out of his information, and took it. We regret the thing—even more than you, perhaps. It does Trent's infinite harm."

I listened without any softening of my anger.

"You didn't come here to tell me you were sorry for this," I said. "What is it you want now?"

"Mrs. Haynes," Uncle Bill said, still in his manner of simple earnestness, "we have come to make one more effort to get you to give up our nephew—for his own sake. Won't you please sit down and listen to us?"

DEFIANTLY I sat down and they took seats in straight chairs, just as they had the day before.

"It won't do any good to talk or offer me money," I said "If you could just get it through your heads that I love Graydon for himself—not for his money or his position!"

"It's because we do believe you that we have come again," Uncle Bill said. "If you really love him, you won't want to ruin the career that he is just ready to take up as General Chairman of Trent's. If he marries you, that career is closed to him. Yet he has recently shown such ability that we are at last ready to put things into his hands. We think he can be the greatest head that Trent's has ever had. There has been nothing like his grasp and vision in fifty years. Trent's needs him, and the people dependent on Trent's need him. It is the great chance of his life. If you hold selfishly to your plan to marry him, that chance is gone. If you love him, you will give him up."

I stared at him, unable to speak. It was as if he had put his thin old hand inside me and taken hold of my heart to stop its beating. He had hit me in the one place where my own doubts and fears had left me weak.

"Do you mean," I asked huskily at last, "that if I—if we are married, you will really refuse Graydon his big chance—just because of me?"

The two old men nodded solemnly. Then Uncle Bill spoke quickly.

"Not because of you. Because of your divorces. No Trent has ever been divorced or married to a divorced woman. You have been twice divorced. If our nephew marries you, his connection with Trent's ceases. And you will have taken from him the biggest chance in his life."

I looked from one to the other desperately. There they sat strangely kind, but with no sign of relenting. Suddenly I knew that they had won. A knot tied itself in my throat and bitter misery had me in its grip; but I knew they had won.

"All right," I managed to say. "I'll give him up—if you promise me to put him in full charge of Trent's and let him run it as he sees fit—without interference."

I could see them both taking long breaths. They looked at one another. Then Uncle Bill said, "Very well. We promise."

There was a dead silence. They seemed to expect me to speak. But I couldn't. The deadness was in me too. At last Uncle Bill spoke again, reluctantly

"We must ask you to—er—that is, not to let our nephew know how you came to make your decision," he said. "I need not say that he would refuse to accept it—under such circumstances "

"I won't tell him," I said drearily. "Now, go away, please. I've got to think."

I didn't even go to the door with them. I didn't hear their words of leave-taking. I sat, altogether numb, staring blindly at the chairs where they had been sitting, till Martha came and

told me lunch was ready. Then I got up and went out to the garden. I walked around and around, looking dully at each flower and shrub. Then I sat in the summerhouse, thinking in a strange, dead sort of way.

Graydon found me there. He came, whistling gaily, hunting for me. I tightened up in every nerve. I didn't know how I was going to face him—and tell him. But I knew I had to.

His face was all aglow, the light of triumph in his eyes.

"They've done it!" he called from a distance. "They've done it, my dear! I'm the head of the octopus! And it's all on account of you. You've made a man of me—a business man—a—" He stopped in front of me, and all the joy and triumph went out of him. "Sweetheart!" he cried. "What's the matter? What's wrong?"

I tried to think how much happiness I had brought to him by promising not to marry him. I tried to smile and say something happy and cheerful. But it wasn't any use. All I did was to begin to cry.

He had me in his arms in a second, telling me he loved me, telling me I must stop crying and explain.

Finally I sobbed out that I couldn't marry him. I was terribly ashamed. I knew I ought to be brave and strong and collected. I knew I ought to be calm and cool and convincing, ought to make him feel that I had made the decision thoughtfully and without unhappiness. And all I did was to sob out that I couldn't marry him.

"What nonsense are you talking, you poor thing?" he cried tenderly, gathering me still closer. "There's nothing in the world that can stop our marriage. What silly thoughts have you been having?"

I could only shake my head. I couldn't speak.

"You love me or you wouldn't be crying about it," he said. "I know that. And I love you twice as much. You're everything in the world to me. You're legally free from Haynes. There isn't a thing to stop us. Come on, sweetheart, tell me what foolish thoughts have been bothering you."

I got myself together enough to falter, "I can't marry you. Please don't ask me any more. Just go away and—forget me."

His hands took hold of me firmly by the arms and his grey eyes looked keenly into mine. Then abruptly he rose and left me. I stared after him with a curious despairing unbelief. I had forced myself to tell him to go, but it hadn't seemed possible that he would do it. I had a numb feeling that for me the end of life had come. I might just as well die. It wasn't that I had any thought of committing suicide. I just had the feeling that if I merely let go, I would stop living. It seemed the simplest thing to do.

I let go, but of course I didn't get my wish. I just stayed numb with despair. Then the numbness began to wear off and the despair to become more terrible. I began to realize that I wanted to live and desperately wanted to be happy—with Graydon. I told myself that I had been a fool, that nothing justified sending away a love like Graydon's, that I had smashed the most beautiful thing in the world, for myself and for the man I loved. I wept.

After a long time I began to think of Graydon instead of myself, and I came out of my fit of weeping. I told myself sadly that I had done the thing, that it couldn't be helped, that my job now was to finish it up. I must go into the house, pack, and leave. I got up grimly and forced my feet to carry me across the lawn to the bungalow.

AS I entered the house I saw Martha's round, chocolate-colored face stuck out of the pantry and found her eyes, big and scared, gazing at me. But I went on upstairs. Martha didn't matter a bit. She would be taken care of.

Once I started packing I felt steadier; but, every few minutes, as I would put something into a bag, I would have a terrible sinking feeling. Once again it would seem that the end of the world had come, that I was going to walk out into dead blackness somewhere and stop being alive.

At last when I had everything packed, I went tensely down to the telephone to call a taxi. As in a fog, I had just begun to dial the number when Martha came in and put her hand on mine.

"You ain't 'lowed to do dat, honey," she said, looking scared. "No'm, you ain't 'lowed to do dat. Ah knows you's had er quahl, but you ain't gwine ter walk out lak dat. Ah heered you openin' an' shuttin' dem draws. Ah knows you been er packing. But you ain't gwine ter go lak dat."

I stared at her in amazement. Her big black eyes were circled all the way round with scared whites, but she held my hand from dialing, and she spoke with gentleness, affection, and firmness. Somehow it warmed me, gave me strength.

"I've got to go, Martha," I said. "You don't understand. I can't stay here any more. Let go of my hand. I've got to get away."

But she hung on, looking more and more scared and getting more and more excited in her protests. I was just about to fling her off by force, when there was a clatter of steps outside the door was flung open, and Graydon appeared.

Martha said, "Thank de Lawd!" fervently, let go of my hand and disappeared.

Graydon was a little grim, almost breathless, but with a light of triumph in his eyes. He swept me into his arms and held me crushed up against him for a long minute. Then he began to speak.

"It's all right, sweetheart," he said. "It's all fixed. I've seen the old buzzards and told them to go to blazes. I'm through with Trent's for good. You and I are going over to Maryland right now and get married. Then we're coming back here, and I'm going to start really earning a living of my own."

He drew back his head and looked at me with bright, eager confident eyes. Then he kissed me. And I gave a long sigh of relief and happiness.

For minutes we stood there, clinging and kissing and talking love as if we had just confessed it for the first time. Then he swung me to the door.

"Come on," he said. "Wait. I forgot. I promised Martha a hundred dollars if she kept you here. You see, I got it out of her that those old fools had been here talking to you. I'll be back."

HE went out to the kitchen. The doorbell rang. I gave my eyes a dab with my handkerchief and opened it. There stood the two "old buzzards," looking scared and then relieved I was suddenly afraid myself. But I drew back to let them in.

They looked nervously at one another and then at me. Finally Uncle Bill said, "Our nephew. Then he hasn't arrived?"

At that minute Graydon came back.

"Yes," he snapped. "I'm here. What do you want?"

His face was set, his head up, his eyes flashing.

"We want you back, boy," Uncle Bill said with pathetic earnestness. "We were wrong about everything. We want you back. We apologize humbly to Mrs. Haynes. We wish you happiness—together. Will both of you forgive us?"

Graydon stared. Then suddenly his taut face broke into smiles. He slapped Uncle Bill on the shoulder and put an arm around me.

"Sure we'll forgive you," he said with a grin. "Come on you're just in time to be witnesses at our wedding."

He pulled me past them and hustled me in a half-hysterical condition down the path to where the big black car stood behind his little one.

Looking back as I stepped into the roadster, I saw the two "old buzzards" hurrying down the path after us.

Graydon started the car, and we slid forward with increasing speed. The big car followed us. I laid my head down on Graydon's shoulder with a last, long sigh.

We were married that very evening, with Uncle Bill and Uncle John as witnesses. The newspapers reversed their whole attitude toward us, played up our romance pleasantly, and then dropped it. That is what money can do. Today the *octopus* is no longer an octopus. Its arms stretch out farther than ever through this land of ours, but under Graydon's guiding spirit they distribute happiness even while they continue to amass riches. Graydon is happy. The two of us are supremely happy together.

But in my heart, no matter what the fullness of love with my husband may be, I will always feel that I came to him as damaged goods. If only I could undo those two marriages which make me shop-worn in the eyes of the world, and blot out the memory of those hideous newspaper headlines that made me out a lurid, cheap divorcee! Graydon will never know what that did to me, all that pain that went deep and at my age can never be forgotten. But with his love to go on with, and his kind, sweet eyes, and his arms around me, I shall keep buried within myself the painful memories of those days that tarnished me—days that I lived before I knew him—that I wish I had never lived. I shall give him the gayety that is so rightly his and try to love him so much that out of my undying remorse will come a new foundation of honesty and undimmed trust

After 14 Day Evaporation Test
8 popular brands of polish became thick and gummy, evaporated 35% to 60%, while the NEW Cutex Polish stayed smooth flowing, as easy to apply as ever!
CUTEX
Crème
POLISH
ROBIN RED

Do You Lose ⅓ to ½ of Your Nail Polish *By Evaporation?*

New Cutex Polish is Usable to the Last Drop!

"WE'RE getting tired of having to pay for TWO bottles of nail polish in order to really get ONE!" women complained. We thought that was a legitimate grievance, so we perfected our wonderful New Cutex, and now we are proud to say, "Buy the New Cutex and you'll get *all* the polish you pay for!" We've made sure that the last drop will be just as much of a joy to apply as the first one!

To prove it, we deliberately uncorked 10 bottles of nail polish . . . two of our New Cutex and eight popular rival brands —and let their contents stay exposed to the air for 14 days.

Only the New Cutex stood the test! All the rest became thick and gummy. But the New Cutex evaporated less than half as much as the competitive brands. After 14 days, it still went on the nails as smooth as glass, free flowing . . . just right!

Think what a saving this means! A saving not only of money, but of annoyance. Add to this Cutex's longer wear, its freedom from chipping and peeling, its fine lacquer, its 11 smart shades . . . and you can't wonder that women everywhere are refusing to put up with ordinary wasteful polishes any longer.

And besides giving you twice as much for *your* money, Cutex costs so little to begin with! The New Cutex is still the old economical price of 35¢ a bottle, Crème or Clear.

NORTHAM WARREN, New York, Montreal, London, Paris

New "Smoky" Shades

MAUVE—A misty lavender pink. Perfect with blue, gray or delicate evening pastels.

RUST—A smoky shade for tanned hands. Good with brown, beige, gray, green.

ROBIN RED—New, soft red. Goes with everything, sophisticated with black and white.

OLD ROSE—A soft, feminine dusky rose. Flattering—especially with the new wine shades!

THE NEWEST SHADE—BURGUNDY—Brand-new deep, purply wine shade. Enchanting with pastels, black, white or wine, and electrically smart with blue.

MAIL COUPON TODAY for complete Cutex Manicure Kit, containing your 2 favorite shades of Cutex Liquid Polish, Remover and sample of Cutex Lipstick for only 16¢.

Northam Warren Corporation, Dept. 7-M-9
191 Hudson Street, New York, N. Y.
(In Canada, P. O. Box 2320, Montreal)

I enclose 16¢ to cover cost of postage and packing for the Cutex Introductory Set, including 2 shades of Cutex Liquid Polish as checked. Mauve ☐ Rust ☐ Burgundy ☐ Robin Red ☐ Old Rose ☐

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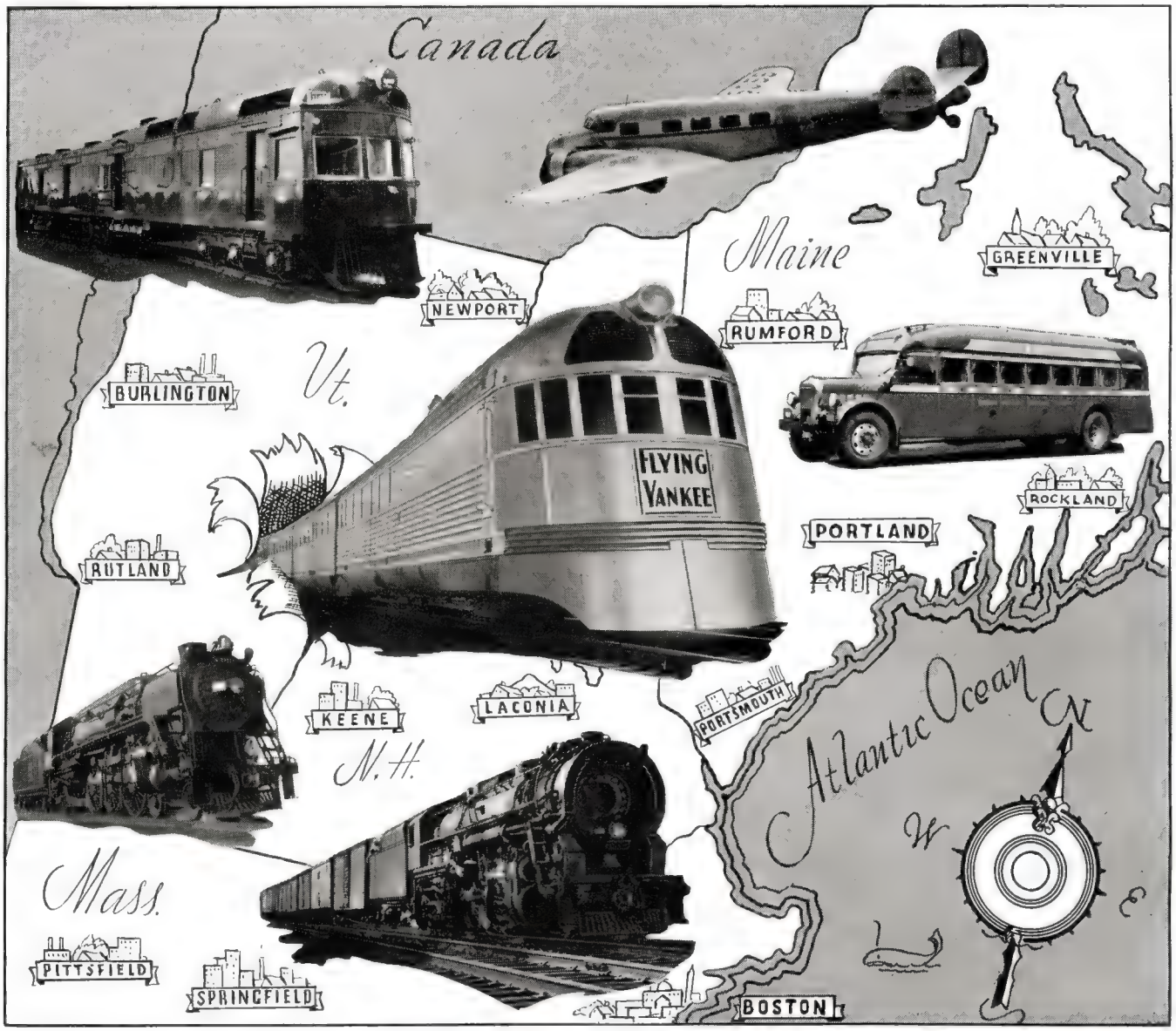

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END-OF-THE SEASON PICK-UPS!

BY ELINOR BLAIR

Look regal—feel cool, the Davis formula for success

Davis recipe: Take one simple dress, add giddy new accessories

On a hot August day Bette wears a sheer black lace

THE transition from winter into spring isn't nearly so much of a fashion problem as the one from summer into fall. Somehow, in the early spring, you can blend a new spring hat with a winter dress or coat and get a pretty satisfactory effect. But try wearing a fall hat with a light summer dress and the result is both ungainly and a little silly.

The first of August finds most of us rather fed up with our cotton and gay colored silks. I get the urge, I know, to do something to pep my clothes up. But when I wander through the stores, I can't get myself into a mood for a new hat or for a heavier silk or woolen. The mere idea of the attractive fall merchandise, on display, gives me the jitters, especially with the mercury around ninety outside. So what can I do? And what do you do?

That's exactly what I asked Bette Davis. And if you think she was stumped for an answer, you're wrong. She has a good one for both you and me. Sheer dark dresses with which she can blend new fall accessories are her end-of-the-season stand-bys. She wears them for general daytime and semi-formal activities, using her very light summer clothes for sportswear and home use.

The sheer dark dress is as good a wardrobe bet for the small town dweller as it is for the city wise. Chosen with care, it cleverly bridges that awkward gap between warm weather fashions and the new fall creations. It enables you to look cool without feeling conspicuous amid the exciting new clothes flooding the market. Frankly, I always have been of the opinion that the woman who spends her money the most wisely is the one who never plunges headlong into any new fashion cycle. Rather, she lets others squander their money on the early fads while she waits for the mode to crystallize—buying when she knows her clothes and accessories will be right for the whole season. That way, she avoids the headaches and purse-string pains that beset the first-with-the-newest fans!

Even when you have no idea what the new fall colors will be, there are two staple shades which you can rely upon—season in and season out they color a good portion of every wardrobe. They are brown and black. So, if you choose your sheer dress or suit in black or brown, you are playing safe. And you have the opportunity to use the summery colors in accessories as well as the new fall ones.

Because she is blue-eyed, fair-skinned and golden-haired, Bette prefers black. And to prove that there is no monotony to such a choice, the pictures of her here this month show you how smart she looks in costumes where black is the predominating tone. Besides the fact that black is especially flattering to her coloring, Bette told me that she chooses black for her transition from summer into fall because the black accessories she selects now will go with new fall colors she will be buying in costumes later on.

"The only dress in this group which isn't made of a sheer fabric is of black silk crêpe with the Roman striped silk scarf and matching turban. However, this dress is a very important one to show in your 'end-of-the-season pick-ups' suggestions. There's never a time," Bette continued, "when I can't find a dress like this in my closet. It may be navy one year, brown another, and usually black as is this one. And, regardless of the changes of fashion, it follows pretty much the same lines with only the shortening of a hem or a little extra flare to the skirt to bring it up to date.

"The why and wherefore of such a dress is obvious. The plain, round neck and the short sleeves, as well as the simple cut of the dress generally, make it a natural for all the giddy, new accessories you'll want to try out. (*Continued on page 12*)

Bette Davis gives her answer to a very serious fashion problem

A Food Children Love—Good for them—Easy for you!

—and costs only 3¢ a portion!

WOMEN bought millions upon millions of cans of Franco-American Spaghetti last year, because they found out that it was one of the greatest time and money savers that ever came into their kitchens! For example, there's no finer lunch or supper for school children than Franco-American, served piping hot, with milk and fruit. For dinner serve Franco-American as a main dish, or use it to make left-overs taste like a million dollars. It usually costs only 10¢ a can — less than 3¢ a portion.

Be sure, however, that you get Franco-American Spaghetti — the kind with the extra good sauce. It's entirely different from all other ready-cooked spaghetti. Its delicious cheese-and-tomato sauce is made with eleven savory ingredients — the secret recipe which was the great discovery of a famous French chef. Get Franco-American today at your grocers — it will save you no end of time and trouble.

Franco-American SPAGHETTI

Made by the Makers of Campbell's Soups

THE FRANCO-AMERICAN FOOD COMPANY, Dept. 69, Camden, New Jersey. Please send me your free recipe book: "30 Tempting Spaghetti Meals."

Name (print) _____

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The Modern Hostess

(*Continued from page 9*)

recommendation for this cranberry, banana and pastry combination comes from amusing Patsy Kelly. But you don't have to take their word for it since you have the recipe right here to test out yourself. However, I must warn you that since cranberries will not be in season for a while it would be an excellent idea to keep a copy of the recipe, written out or pasted on a filing card, for safety and future reference. But don't overlook it or throw it out, I beg, for this is certainly one pie that deserves to be known to many more than the privileged few who can and do order it at that *Café de Paris*.

Bear in mind also, as you prepare, in your own kitchen, these exceptionally fine dishes which have come to you direct from a famous restaurant kitchen out in Hollywood, that the motto in both culinary "workshops" might well be that old saying so familiar to all: "Variety is the spice of life."

Modern Romances Star Recipes

SALADE CAFÉ DE PARIS, THOUSAND ISLAND DRESSING

To 1 cup combined lobster and crab meat (fresh or canned) add 3 hard-cooked eggs, chopped, 3 tomatoes, peeled and quartered, a dozen asparagus tips (fresh or canned) cut into small pieces, and a small head of lettuce, finely shredded. Mix with Thousand Island Dressing and serve very cold in a salad bowl lined with crisp lettuce leaves or in lettuce cups on individual salad plates.

THOUSAND ISLAND DRESSING

2 tablespoons finely chopped green pepper
2 tablespoons finely chopped stuffed olives
1 tablespoon minced onion or chives
1 hard-cooked egg, chopped
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
3 tablespoons Chili sauce
1 cup mayonnaise
½ cup whipped cream, if desired*

Combine chopped green pepper, olives, minced onion (or chives) and egg. Season with Worcestershire and Chili sauce. Blend with mayonnaise.

**This dressing may be "extended" by gently folding in ½ cup whipped cream. Always serve icy cold.*

CHINESE FRIED SHRIMPS, SAUCE PIQUANTE

2 dozen large shrimps*
1 egg, separated
2 teaspoons melted butter
⅛ teaspoon salt
¼ cup beer
¼ cup flour
¼ cup cornstarch

Separate egg. Add butter and salt to slightly beaten yolk. Add beer and blend thoroughly. Combine flour and cornstarch. Slowly add one-half of liquid, stirring it in to make a smooth dough. Add remaining liquid gradually, then fold in stiffly beaten white of egg. Dip shrimps in this batter, coating them thoroughly. Fry in deep hot fat (hot enough to brown an inch-cube of bread in 40 seconds) until crisp and brown. Drain on unglazed paper and serve hot with Sauce Piquante.

**Mr. Janios suggested using raw fresh shrimps, after removing them carefully from the shell. However, I tested the recipe with canned (and therefore cooked) shrimps with splendid results. In both cases be sure to remove the intestinal vein from the back of each shrimp; cutting deeply into the back but being careful not to split shrimp apart.*

SAUCE PIQUANTE

½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon dry mustard
2 teaspoons lemon juice
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
1 cup tomato catsup

To salt and mustard add lemon juice and Worcestershire. When thoroughly blended combine with catsup and serve very cold, with Chinese Fried Shrimps or other sea foods.

VEAL PAPRIKA, HONGROIS

1½ pounds veal cutlet
2 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons flour
2 teaspoons paprika
½ cup (condensed) canned chicken soup
½ cup cream
½ teaspoon salt
a few grains pepper

Have the butcher cut veal cutlet into individual servings, pounding each piece with a wooden mallet to flatten somewhat. Sprinkle these pieces lightly with a little salt, pepper and flour. Melt butter in skillet, add veal pieces and fry on both sides to a very light brown. Remove veal from pan. Add flour and paprika, stir until blended. Add chicken soup and cream, cook and stir until smooth and thickened. Season this gravy with salt and pepper, adding more to taste. Return veal to skillet, cover and cook gently until veal is tender (20-30 minutes). Serve with buttered noodles or buttered rice.

Also "serve sour cream on the side" advises Mr. Janios. Frankly I think this dish is perfect without it, but there's the suggestion for those who'd care to try it.

RUBY PIE

2½ cups cranberries
1¾ cups sugar
1½ cups cold water
3 bananas, approximately
rich pastry for 1 crust

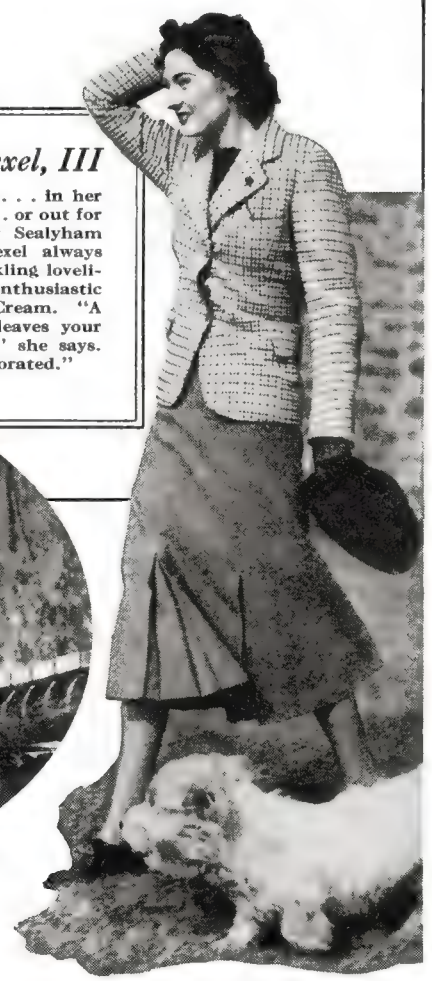
Wash and pick over cranberries. Add sugar and water and cook in covered saucepan until berries stop popping. Put ⅓ of these cooked berries into a greased unlined pie plate. Add a layer of sliced bananas. Continue with alternate layers of cranberry mixture and bananas. Cover with pie crust, fitting pastry closely around edge of dish. Cut several slashes in crust. Bake in hot oven (455° F.) 15-20 minutes or until lightly browned.

Freshening Up THIS WAY

Does More Than Clean Your Skin— It Invigorates the Skin!

Mrs. A. J. Drexel, III

At parties and dinners . . . in her simplest play clothes . . . or out for a brisk walk with her Sealyham "Daffy". . . . Mrs. Drexel always presents the same sparkling loveliness! Mrs. Drexel is an enthusiastic user of Pond's Cold Cream. "A Pond's freshening up leaves your skin more than clean," she says. "It's brighter . . . invigorated."



FRESHENING UP is *more* than getting your skin clean. That's what beautiful girls who have found the Pond's way of freshening up say.

Before they make a single appearance, they give their skin the brisk toning up as well as cleansing that sends them forth with such fresh and vital-looking young faces.

Rousing Treatments Fight Off Skin Faults . . .

For this Pond's way of skin care, they find, invigorates their skin. It tones up faulty oil glands, chief cause of blackheads and blemishes . . . livens the circulation. Tones the tissues, so lines will soon be smoothing out, your skin be clear, fine textured, flawless!

Here is the simple method they follow. It's a method whose fame has spread around the world!

Every night, smooth on Pond's Cold Cream. As it softens and releases dirt, make-up and skin secretions—wipe off. Now pat in more Pond's Cold Cream—*briskly*, till the circulation stirs. Your skin feels invigorated. It is softer—smoother!

Every morning (and before make-up) repeat. Your skin is smooth for powder—fresh, vital looking!

Begin yourself to use Pond's. See *your* skin, too, grow clearer, brighter, smoother—admired for its youth and freshness.

***Send for* SPECIAL 9-TREATMENT TUBE**
and 3 other Pond's Beauty Aids

Pond's, Dept. 9MR-CJ, Clinton, Conn. Rush special tube of Pond's Cold Cream, enough for 9 treatments, with generous samples of 2 other Pond's Creams and 5 different shades of Pond's Face Powder. I enclose 10c to cover postage and packing.

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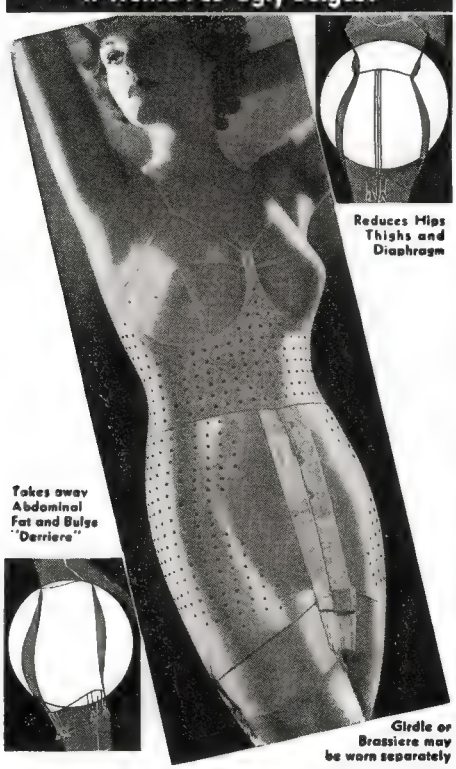
Correct Your Figure Faults
Perfolastic Not Only Confines, It Removes Ugly Bulges!


Reduces Hips Thighs and Diaphragm
Takes away Abdominal Fat and Bulge "Derriere"
Girdle or Brassiere may be worn separately

Thousands of women today owe their slim youthful figures to the quick, safe way to reduce . . . Perfolastic.

"Hips 12 inches smaller," says Miss Richardson. "Lost 60 pounds and 9 inches," writes Mrs. Derr. Why don't you, too, test the Perfolastic Reducing Girdle and Brassiere at our expense?

IF YOU DO NOT REDUCE 3 INCHES in 10 DAYS
. . . it will cost you nothing!

Because so many Perfolastic wearers reduce *more* than 3 inches we believe we are justified in making you the above unqualified agreement.

IMMEDIATELY APPEAR INCHES SLIMMER!

■ You *appear* inches smaller at once, and yet are so comfortable you can scarcely realize that every minute you wear the Perfolastic garments the massage-like action and gentle pressure are *actually reducing* hips, waist, thighs and diaphragm... the spots where fat first accumulates. You will be thrilled with the results...as are other Perfolastic wearers!

PERFOLASTIC REDUCES SAFELY... QUICKLY WITHOUT DIET, DRUGS OR EXERCISE!

■ You do not have to risk your health or change your comfortable mode of living. No strenuous exercise to wear you out . . . no dangerous drugs to take . . . and no diet to reduce face and neck to wrinkled flabbiness. The perforations and soft, silky lining make Perfolastic delightful to wear.

■ See for yourself the wonderful quality of the material! Read the astonishing experiences of prominent women who have reduced many inches in a few weeks... safely . . . and quickly!

You risk nothing . . . why not mail coupon NOW!

SEND FOR TEN DAY FREE TRIAL OFFER!

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Dept. 539, 41 EAST 42nd ST., New York, N.Y.

Please send me FREE BOOKLET describing and illustrating the new Perfolastic Girdle and Brassiere, also sample of perforated material and particulars of your 10-DAY FREE TRIAL OFFER!

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Use Coupon or Send Name and Address on Penny Postcard

Child Bride

(*Continued from page 42*)

Jared to let me come to the settlement for treatment when I was able to creep feebly about with the strength of a kitten.

Jared made few objections, in spite of the way he usually demanded I be at his beck and call. Friends were bringing tales of a Medway boy, liquored-up and showing off in public, shouting insults about Dismukes. Jared was so busy conferring darkly with men at all hours, and Ma with fretting about the revival of old bitterness, that neither had much time for me.

And so, one day "Old Liz" rattled off and transported me straight to heaven!

How can I describe what that visit to "the settlement" meant to my starved soul? It wasn't only the gracious comfort, the simple beauty of the place. These delighted me, it's true, but the supreme joy of the experience was the association with Dr. Mary and—oh, far above all else—with Matt Conway.

Mornings I usually spent in bed; in the afternoon I made myself useful in the clinic. But it was in the hours after supper when Dr. Mary was often busy that I fairly basked in Matt's presence.

One night I felt so happy I kept laughing aloud for pure joy, something I'd seldom done in my whole life. I was wearing a new dress, too, of cotton print, the exact blue of my eyes. A teacher had shown me how to cut it out and sew it on the school sewing machine. I could tell from a look in Matt's eyes that he found me pretty, and the knowledge intoxicated me. Finally he spoke to me in a tone he'd never used before.

"Letty, in two weeks I'll be going away."

"Going away?" I felt my face grow white.

"College opens then. I must go back."

I gave a stifled moan and, snatching his hand in both of mine, I pressed it tight against my cheek and covered it with kisses.

"My God! Letty!"

He sprang to his feet and tried to draw away, but I only clung the tighter. I could not have released my hold then, even if I'd tried. And suddenly he was no longer withdrawing.

Dropping to the sofa beside me, he picked me up bodily and set me on his knees, holding me tightly in strong arms and bending his face to mine. With his cheek against my forehead, he drew me close there for a moment. I clung to him, trembling. Never in all my life had I known tenderness; never, even in childhood.

"Oh, Letty, my darling! My sweetest little girl! I didn't want to tell you how it kills me to go away and leave you."

I WAS trembling violently now. "If I could follow you, like a dog, I'd do it, Matt. I'd work or beg or steal, if I could just be where I'd see you—"

"Letty, my dearest, don't say it!"

"It was bad up there on the mountain before, when I didn't know 'bout things. But now I've found out what it means to a woman when she loves a man. I feel like I can't bear it to go back to—to him—"

"A woman! God help you! Not sixteen and yet carrying a woman's heaviest burdens! It kills me! But even if I had a way to support you, my darling, think what it would mean to Dr. Mary and the whole work of the settlement here! They'd be ruined if I came and took a man's wife away from him when he'd called us into his home. I can't betray Aunt Mary and let her down when she's been everything, done everything, for me! Oh, God, why can't there be some way out! Leaving you here—so innocent and helpless, at the mercy of this brutal situation—"

Suddenly he crushed me to him. I eagerly raised my face and his kisses showered down on it in a rain of ecstasy.

"Matt! Matt! I love you! I love you!" I panted urgently. Dr. Mary and the nurse who shared the hospital cottage were both busy across the campus at a meeting. We had the house to ourselves. Neither scruples of virtue nor obligations of loyalty held me back. This was my sole chance at the bliss I had not even known *could* be. What reason, under God's heaven, was there for my not giving, in love, what had been torn from me roughly before I even understood what I was losing? By every law of kindred spirit and craving flesh, this man was my true mate; that other, on the mountain, only a captor who held me in unwilling bondage.

For an instant Matt's veins must have run with the same fiery purpose; we clung together for one tense moment. Then he abruptly released me and sprang to his feet.

"What am I thinking of? God forgive me!" he said, breathing hard. "I was forgetting. *I am a doctor!*" As if those words were a charm to keep him from temptation, he walked out of the room and I heard the front door slam.

NEXT day I had the terrible feeling that I was being punished for what I'd tried to do when I saw Jared drive his wagon to the gate and stalk up the path, looking black as a thundercloud. I knew he'd come for me, even before I hurried down to meet him. Without a word of greeting, he tossed the command at me, as at a dog, "Bring yore things and git out of here."

"Is anything wrong?" I faltered.

"*Wrong?* In a man takin' his woman back where she belongs? I been a fool long enough, and there'll be no more lallygaggin' down here with these furriners! Clyde Medway is makin' me the talk of the countryside—sayin' Dismuke blood is peterin' out, me fatherin' a circus-freak baby and lettin' a man do for my woman in childbirth! By God, I've sent him word I'll shoot on sight! And meanwhile, you come along home!"

While I scrambled my things together, he waited at the gate, scorning even to come inside. Maria, the cook, sympathetic and solicitous, came to help me, and when I tried to give her messages for the Conways, nodded her head sagely.

"Don't worry, honey. Miss Mary know how dese mountaineer mens does. She'll know you cain't help it. But, Lawd, dat boy goin' be crazy when he find you gone!"

I wrung her kind, brown hand hard in speechless gratitude, and hurried away, tears choking my throat with pain, to climb dumbly into the wagon where Jared already sat waiting in sultry impatience.

He whipped the mule unmercifully and rattled out of the settlement as if he couldn't leave fast enough. As we began to climb on the mountain road I cast back one last look which meant farewell to all the peace and joy I'd ever known, ever *would* know, and sobs burst from me in a torrent.

"What the hell's ailin' you!" he demanded roughly, hauling the mule to a halt just where the road hung perilously on a cliff-edge at a curve round a huge boulder. " 'Pears like we've had enough of your didoes, just because you birthed a baby—and a dead one, at that. You're gettin' fine-lady notions in yore head, all tricked out in this blue, flowery finery! Say, look here, what's been a'goin' on? Has there been any monkey-business with that red-headed doctor feller? By God, that's it!"

He almost shouted the last words and his

(*Continued on page 101*)

"This snapshot fixed everything"

"WHEN he went away, we both promised to write. But you know how letters are—you don't say what you intend to, or the other person misinterprets.

"Before we knew it, our letters were mostly spats, explanations, and apologies. We were getting farther apart all the time. One day I was awfully blue, and on impulse sent this old snapshot. I wrote on the back, 'We didn't quarrel then, did we?'

"I wish you could read the letter I got back. It was the old Pete again, not trying to write, just telling me how much he cared. He said he'd always write with this snapshot in front of him—he could talk to the girl in it so she'd never misunderstand."

The snapshots you'll want Tomorrow —you must take Today

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Accept nothing but the film in the familiar yellow box—Kodak Film—which only Eastman makes.

The Price of My Sin

(*Continued from page 21*)

and tried to get down, but I wouldn't let him. I kept hugging him closer and closer to me. Think of some "nice family in the country" taking him away where Mom and I wouldn't have him any more!

"Billy," I choked, "listen to sister. We've got to run—hide. They—they're after us!"

"Who, Cammy?"

"That lady in there. That horrible, hateful, nasty lady is making Mom give me away to her! And give you away to somebody else! Billy, they're going to take our house and our—our Mom!"

He let out such a wail that I clapped both hands over his mouth. At the end of the street, the town ended too, and there was a wood. We hid there, Billy and I, all afternoon, peeking out from behind trees until we saw the lady come out. She called to us. Mom was with her and Mom called, too. We shrank back into the shadows, shivering.

AFTER the lady had got into her car and driven off, we crept home, Billy and I, hand in hand. I can still remember Mom in the one rocking chair on the front porch. Funny to see Mom there, just rocking back and forth; her reddened, roughened hands idle in her lap, that blank look on her face.

She got up when she saw us. She tried to grin at us. She even tried to scold. "You kids!" she said truculently. "It's the beat of me where you get off to! And here—here the lady who come to call had presents for you." She came down the steps.

"Why, what on earth—" noting our tears.

"I listened," I confessed in a loud, wild scream. "I heard her. Mom, please say you won't give us away! I can't stand it!"

Mom's face quivered. I saw more tears oozing out from under her reddened lids. For a minute we just stood there—all three of us—a forlorn, wretched, scared little family. Then all at once Mom's slumped shoulders squared. Infinite courage in that.

"I guess," Mom said sturdily, "that them women have been wrong from the start. I guess—whatever I have to do—there's room in my life for my kids!"

Ten years later, the little house, the little town, the lilac bushes, and the country school were like so many dreams. Only that one day stood out. The day Mom was going to give us away—and didn't.

They were ten back-breaking, heartbreaking years in a city of half a million. When Mom was forty, she looked sixty. With the incredibly clear gaze of eighteen, I could look at Mom—and size her up—see what the years had done to her. The years had left a hoarse note in her voice and in her laugh. The neat dark hair had gone grey and stringy. Lines had bitten deep around her eyes and her mouth and, strangely enough, the small, tired figure I remembered on that front porch so long ago had gone stooped and flabby with soft, unhealthy fat. You could see the hardness, the weariness of the years in her eyes and her skin and her hands. Ten years of general office work in the wholesale district. We called it Market Row. Outside the farmers set up their stalls, and the air was always heavy with the smell of fruit and vegetables. Mom wasn't young. She had no training. But she worked. She got along. Other women insisted on an eight-hour day. Eight, ten, twelve hours a day—it was all one to her. Other workers were ill, stayed out at times. One of the clearest memories I have is watching Mom tie a bit of clean flannel about her throat as casually as she wrapped her sandwiches in a newspaper.

"One of them pesky head colds," she said hoarsely. "Mind you get Billy off to school."

She'd done it before—worked through fever and a drugging illness. That time she didn't. She fell in the street and they took her to the city hospital. You had to have twenty dollars for an advance deposit to get into a private hospital. She didn't have it. In all those ten years, she'd never borrowed a cent or asked for help or had more than one month's rent between us and the street. That time in the city hospital, they said Mom had typhoid, and when she got well, she had no job to go back to. But she got another job at last in Market Row—the hours a little longer and the pay a little less.

This is no sob story, because this part of it is Mom's, and Mom never stopped laughing once. She laughed at the time I took Billy to see her in the hospital and his shirt was buttoned on backwards; at the night she didn't come home because she hadn't any money for groceries and couldn't face us and so she walked the street, up and down, until a cop picked her up for vagrancy. Sad stories, sordid ones, brave ones—she told them all with that husky laughter.

And what had the ten years done to me and to Billy? Well, I'd been brought up in the streets and the playgrounds and right from the start, I was crazy about school, as schoolrooms were always warm. We lived all over town, on the worst streets. And so I loved being in school. Lessons were easier for me than for most kids. And then, too, I had a touching, puppy dog kind of friendliness in those days. Up to when I was sixteen, I liked everybody.

Billy was smart in school but awfully lazy. Not nearly so strong and healthy as I was, but the toughest kid in the block. Very swaggering and loud-voiced, but generous.

Mom thought we were both perfect. I can still remember the way her eyes would brim over when I'd show her my report card. And I can still remember the happy, awed look on her face when we had open house and I showed her the lunchroom, the auditorium, and the classrooms and introduced her to the teachers. If a teacher would say, "Yes, Camilla is one of my very best students," Mom would look as if you'd handed her the world on a silver platter. She was that proud. Especially of me. Not that she loved me more than Billy. But when I got old enough to figure out the difference, I knew that to Mom I was herself—with all that she had wanted and missed, years and years ago. Pretty as she'd never been. Topping my class at school, and she'd never had much chance to go to school. Popular, educated, possessing a good job, engaged to a fine young man some day—that was Mom's burning, passionate ambition for me to make up for her own starved girlhood, her wrecked womanhood—for the ten years she had struggled against odds that any social worker would have told her were impossible. Only Mom would have laughed.

At eighteen, I was Miss Colfax because I'd won the posture test at Colfax High. I was fifth in my class as far as marks went. I had all the business courses I could get at high and Miss Wainwright, my adviser, said I could take my pick of jobs.

"You've got brains and looks—and men will like you," Miss Wainwright told me bluntly. "You'll get by if you use your head."

But I had more than that. Johnny Blythe had picked me—*me*—out of the whole class to lead the Senior Prom with him. Johnny was a football hero and his father was director in a bank. Our school was mixed, you see—rich and poor. And for a year I'd been so crazy about Johnny that I couldn't see straight. Miss Wainwright knew it. That's why she'd added, "If you'll use your head."

There was a little joker in all this that Miss Wainwright didn't know about. Mom never knew it. Billy was to guess it. It happened this way. Kids grow up in high school. They grow out of that stage of puppy dog friendliness. They get to be adults. They acquire adult standards, and some adult standards are pretty snobbish and mean and small-souled. I never realized in grade school that the reason the teachers were so nice to me, invited me to their homes for dinner sometimes, was because they knew that almost never did Billy and I get enough of the right kind of food. Nor did I realize that the people Mom chased down because they'd come from her home town just invited us out occasionally and tolerated her either because they couldn't get out of it or because they pitied us.

But I—well, I'd waked up two years before when my best friend, Sally Jean, stopped being my best friend. I heard her laughing in the locker room one day.

"I tell you, Mother almost died when Cam dragged up that mother of hers after the play last night. She's so funny looking! You could hear her laugh all over the place! She gushed over Mother, and Mother says that's just what she gets for giving in to Dad and not sending me to a private school. I pick up with such people. . . ."

I CUT a class for the first time in my life that day. I walked outside, sat on a stone bench and stared up at the blue sky and hated it; hated Sally Jean; almost hated school that had taught me that Mom shouldn't say, "Pleased to meetcha," and wear a rusty big hat she'd bought at a rummage sale, and rundown at the heel shoes, and a shabby old dress that drooped in the back and hitched up in the front—and laugh that loud and talk so much and gush over people. I bit my lips hard to keep from sobbing. Ask me why Mom looked as she did! Because for ten years she'd never wasted a cent or a thought on herself. That was why! My dresses were fresh and well-made and pretty. She saw to that. And, dear God, what kind of world was it where your very goodness, gallantry, and sacrificing spirit damned you?

Always after that day, I dragged Mom to every school entertainment—and wished deep down inside me that I didn't have to. Always after that, I cringed at every break in taste, manners, grammar; and cried afterwards because I hated myself for it. Mom was Mom. I couldn't change her. I tried sometimes. That was worse. There'd be a look cross her face that would remind me of the days when the town had asked her whom Billy and I looked like—a hurt, humble, scared look— and then my throat would fill with something awfully like a lump and I'd think, "Suppose she realizes some day how she looks to other people, what they really think of her, how much they laugh at her? Suppose *I* make her wish that she had given Billy and me away ten years ago? Oh, no! No! I don't mean to be like this. I won't again!"

Because, deeper than the shame or the hurt, I loved her. And in spite of loving her I could see people smiling their contemptuous little smiles. Call me anything you want to call me—a snob, a selfish brat, an ungrateful, unnatural daughter—and you still haven't called me anything like the names I called myself. And say what you will, it is awfully bad for an adolescent to be torn up inside

(*Continued on page 70*)

Even Pirates Bold

need this kind of food energy daily!

STURDY, ACTIVE little youngsters like yours, mother, burn up each day more bodily energy for their size than Captain Kidd ever did! They come on deck in the morning with their energy supply at a low point. And usually just ahead are the most boisterous, swashbuckling hours of the entire day.

That's why breakfast is so vitally important—why so many wise mothers give their children delicious servings of Cream of Wheat. This unusual wheat cereal gives lots of food energy *quickly*. Even delicate digestive systems handle it with ease. It's a food that "sticks to the ribs". And the enthusiasm of the youngsters themselves tells you it's a feast fit for a pirate chief.

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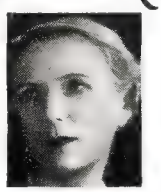

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Maggy Rouff advises her mannequins to wear Woodbury's Facial Powder for its becoming shades and germ-free* quality. This germ-free face powder helps guard the skin from blemishes. See Windsor Rose and the six other youth-blend shades. $1.00, 50¢, 25¢, 10¢.

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(*Continued from page 68*)

like that. Mom was pitifully lonesome—must have been—and so she tried to make friends with people. I made myself over until I was so reserved that people who didn't know me called me conceited, disagreeable. They said she was coarse and vulgar. My grammar was perfect, I never raised my voice. I controlled a fiery temper with taut, icy nerves. I insisted on the plainest dresses but of good material, used less make-up than any other girl in the school, flung myself into my studies and thought, "Damn people! I hate them! I'll fight, fight my way to the top. And when I'm through, they'll take back everything they ever said about her!"

THAT sounded awfully good until I met Johnny—and fell for Johnny. Pride, defiance, ambition, ideals—he smashed them all with one laughing, dark glance, just with the way he said, "Cam." I met him more than halfway. I guess I was lonelier than I knew, more tired of fighting than I realized. Here was someone to love, someone I needn't protect, defend, and lie to. Because from sixteen on, I'd lied to Mom. Funny that this person or that never came to call. Why didn't my friends drop in more? I always had a reason for her, and a good one. I saved her that way and in saving her I lost the truth and intimacy I should have had with her.

Let me remember the night of the Senior Prom, the sweetest night I ever knew with Johnny. The last innocent one.

"I'm sorry we're graduating," Johnny said in his little roadster, and moonlight sprayed the windshield. "Guess why?"

I flushed. "You won't miss me."

"Cam, don't talk like that! Not even in fun! You know I'm crazy about you—so crazy about you I can't—stand it. Tried to talk the old man into State University instead of Yale but no dice."

I shivered. Boy and girl kisses can be very real, so real that they leave you aching and longing and scared. Our kisses had got like that, Johnny's and mine. And next week, I'd take my first job. I'd work all day through the hot summer and Johnny would play around with the girls whose folks had summer homes at the lakes. In the fall he would go away for good—and I'd die. I knew I'd die if I lost Johnny!

"I'm in love with you, Cam, sweet!" Johnny caught me into arms that were hungry and hard, and I couldn't speak. I just buried my face on his big shoulder and cried. The proudest moment of that night was not when the amber spotlight played on the grand march and I'd headed the line with Johnny, not when all the boys had cut and cut because boys are not snobs, naturally. They liked me and I liked them. It was the girls I had learned to steer clear of. But the sweetest, proudest moment was in the dark after the prom when Johnny pinned his class pin on my fluffy white dress Mom made.

"This means," said Johnny huskily, "that you're engaged to me. My girl—forever."

"Johnny! Johnny, darling!" Color flooded my face and throat. Rapture pumped through my veins. I went weak and limp in his arms, and again and again his mouth drained mine, and then for a long while, we just clung together, hardly daring to do that, not bearing to pull away.

"You're so sweet. You're like a—a flower or something with all the dew still on it," he murmured with a shamefaced grin but proudly, too. And I felt a blind happiness pour over me, blind because I didn't know that Johnny wanted me, and that more than he wanted me, he wanted me to be the kind of girl he couldn't take lightly. Young love is like that. As shy and idealistic and impractical as star dust.

I went home with dreams that night and woke up to a sick, dragging nausea. Mom was perched on my bed, a faded grey wrapper pulled around her, hair done up in curlers. She'd taken a rare half-day off.

"Get up, honey," she said heartily. "Billy and me have got a surprise for you. You're a funny one, Cam. Smart—my, but I was proud of all them honors you got last night when you graduated. But you're kinda standoffish with the other kids in your class. It ain't good to be like that, honey. So guess what I did?"

"W-what?" I dragged myself up in bed.

"Well, last night when you wasn't around and before the kids left for that there dance, I invited all the class officers and all the ones on the honor roll over here for breakfast today. I got their names from one of the teachers and they looked real pleased to come. You can't never have a good time, Cam, if you don't try to make up to folks."

Cold seeped into me. I know that all the color drained out of my face. Chet Ferris was class president; and Chet was going to Yale, too. Mabel Blaine was vice-president. I was the only girl in the class play Mabel hadn't invited to the reception at her home afterwards. Mabel had been in the play, too. Sally Jean was class secretary and Johnny—Johnny was treasurer, and it had just so happened that Johnny had never met Mom. Had that just happened or had I avoided it, kept Johnny from ever calling for me at the only home I had because I was ashamed of it—ashamed of my mother, although I would have hated the person who accused me of that? Maybe this all sounds unimportant to you. But my heart broke a little more that day, before it broke forever.

"That's—sweet, Mom," I mumbled and patted her hand, that roughened, reddened hand with the nails all broken. "When are—they—coming?"

"In an hour. My, I got to hustle!" She jumped up and I made myself get out of bed, clammy sweat on my forehead. In an hour they would all troop in—for a laugh. Girls who were jealous of the honors I'd won—and Johnny. Mom had invited all the prominent snobs in school. All the ones who resented me because I had so much in school, and so little outside of it. "Please, dear God, don't let—Johnny—laugh!" I prayed. I couldn't have borne that.

BILLY helped Mom put on the clean tablecloth that was not linen. Billy's blue eyes were suddenly as round in his thin face as when he'd been the baby I'd hidden in the woods, and when I looked at Billy, I knew all at once that he saw what was beneath my white, still face.

Mom's idea of a swank breakfast was pork chops, fried potatoes, scrambled eggs, and coffee in thick mugs. Our china came from the ten-cent store mostly. It was all an agonized blur to me, a blur of other faces—Johnny's face. The smelly little room because the kitchenette was just a hole in the wall; not even a partition between it and the room where we ate, slept, lived. Mom talking a lot, laughing. The bright, knowing glances of the girls. The giggles they tried to turn into coughs. The boys ate heartily and I was pitifully grateful to them. The girls scarcely touched a thing.

Billy helped Mom serve the breakfast and once when I caught his glance, there was such awful pity in his eyes that I didn't dare look at him again. Mom told stories, about the time she found Billy in the gutter with a bag of eggs he had stolen from a grocery store and how he'd sat there breaking them one by one. She told how I could walk on my hands when I was twelve, right across the room and back again. She begged everyone to "eat hearty—there's more where that come from." She had a lovely time.

When they left, she pumped their hands up and down. "Our place ain't very big or

swell, but like I say to Cam, we always got room for all our friends."

I caught Sally Jean's mocking, malicious glance. The curlers had just made Mom's hair more frowzy. Her stockings were darned. She had put the butter on the table in a carton and the cream in a bottle. There was a butler in Sally Jean's home.

"And I'll just bet you have millions of friends, Mrs. Thorpe," Sally said over sweetly.

I put my arm around Mom when the girls laughed, praying she wouldn't guess why they were laughing. And I blessed Johnny forever when he said soberly, "Millions of men friends, I'm sure. You're one hostess who doesn't expect a he-man to subsist on orange juice, thin toast, and black coffee."

But even that didn't help much. After Mom had gone to the office, I put my head down on the old rickety table and cried; let all the tears come that I'd kept back for two years. "Don't, Cammy," Billy said, patting my hair awkwardly. "Gosh, don't! I know it was tough."

"How do you—know, Billy?" I choked.

His thin shoulders shrugged, but there was a boyish quaver beneath the offhand sound of his voice. "A pal of mine told another pal—what his mother had said about Mom. Said she was a—funny old woman, awfully pushy, who'd talk an arm off you if you'd let her. Mom gets along with the people around here. Gives every agent a handout. Knows all the people who run the cafeterias and little shops. But even before that I knew—well, I knew that the fellows I'd sort of pal around with—their parents wouldn't like her. Why, Cammy? Why do people like that get such a kick out of laughing at her? She's so good!"

I put my hand over his. "You know the story, Billy. How ten years ago Mom almost gave us away to families who'd have been like the families of those fellows you're talking about. Billy, do you wish she had?"

"No!" Tortured that was, broken. "Cammy, *you* don't wish that?"

"No, Billy," I whispered and, blind with tears, met his glance. I even tried to grin. "Because it's us—us three—against the world, old boy!"

Funny, for that pathetic surprise breakfast of Mom's to ruin so innocent a romance, but it did. That long fight with myself not to be ashamed of Mom had left me a little too humble. I could outface Sally Jean and a dozen like her. I couldn't outface Johnny. He didn't put me on the defensive. He was sweet. And so all the pride I had melted away and left me grateful—with the awful gratitude of a beggar who expects a shove and gets crumbs instead. He'll take those crumbs. I did. . . .

It was an awful summer, days so hot I could hardly stick out an office day (for I'd got a job almost at once), nights so hot that lots of times I joined the other tenants of buildings in our block and slept in the park. Mom wanted to know where my school friends were and I said they were away for the summer—not that I cared! Mom said, "There are times I think you don't care nothin' for people, Cam."

I wasn't lonesome, for Johny filled up the empty spaces, Johnny who'd call for me after work and drive me out to the lake.

"Cam! Cam, I love you so much! I can't bear to go away this fall and think of you with some other boy. Cam, sweet, don't be afraid when I hold you close like this. . . ."

I wasn't afraid. I wish I had been! I just clung to him and let myself go warm and yielding to his touch, never realizing that the stardust—the reverence of that night of the Senior Prom—was quite gone; never realizing the night I gave myself to Johnny that Johnny was wanting me—and that was all.

"I love you. I—adore you," I faltered, my heart in my throat, my shaking hands caressing his lean, tanned face. "Johnny,

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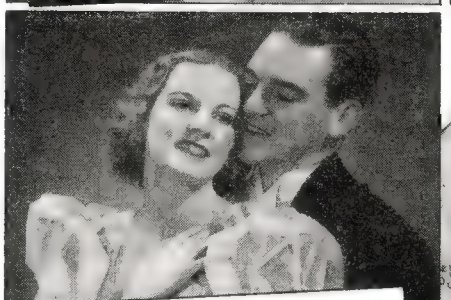

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the only one, who hadn't let me down!" I thought in my blindness, never guessing that Johnny would finish the job the others had only started. Johnny was like Judas. He did it with a kiss.

"Then, Cam—if you do love me—" His mouth bent to my throat and I lay still in his arms. I knew what he was asking for and—you may believe this or not—I thought it was a very little thing for Johnny to ask of me. That awful humbleness was flooding through me, you see. That awful need—of a girl who had locked up her longing for all the warm, human things like young companionship and affection too long and had called that lonely cell in her heart "pride".

It was a sweet summer and yet a sad one and a bitter one. I was torn with guilt and blind with happiness at the same time. Yes, it was wrong. And yes, it was the kind of reckless, passionate giving that is dead sure to end in pain and humiliation. And it did.

"Cam—my parents—well, they're pretty broken up about you and me. You know how parents are. Always thinking you're too young. They say that when a boy is eighteen, he wants one kind of girl. When he is twenty-five, he wants another kind. Oh, darling, I don't mean to hurt you! It's only—well, all they ask me to do is wait, not be engaged—" That was Johnny at the end of that summer. Fumbling, ashamed. . . .

"I get it." Moonlight was spraying the windshield of his little roadster again, but not the same old moon; not the same singing rapture in the wind; and only a dead sort of coldness where my heart had been. Tomorrow he was leaving for Yale. Tomorrow I was taking a better job in an insurance office. And that was that.

"Cam, please—don't look like that!" He caught me in his arms. "I'll be coming home Christmas—and in the summer. . . ."

FROM some unknown place I reached out and found courage. "You may be coming home—but not to me, Johnny," I said steadily, gently—staring up into his flushed, handsome, spoiled face. Johnny meant that he could play his parents' game and have me on the side.

"Cam!" He shook me a little. "You don't mean that! Cam—why, you're acting just as Mother said you would. Mother said that any girl with a mother like yours would be plenty glad to get her hooks into some boy with money and make him come across."

"Johnny!" I gasped, white-lipped and white-faced. "Don't—talk—about Mom! She's not like that!"

It wasn't Johnny looking at me then but Johnny's grey-haired, important father—Johnny's thin-lipped aristocratic mother.

"Your mother wasn't even married," he said sulkily. "Dad looked her up and that's what people say in the town she came from—"

"Johnny! Stop it!"

He was ashamed then. He should have been. "I'm—sorry," he muttered. "I just lost my head. You made me sore, acting as if all you cared about was marrying me—and if you couldn't marry me, right away, we were all through."

Don't blame Johnny too much for the sheer male egotism of that. I'd fed it to him, myself. There'd been a "here's my heart, step on it" attitude in my feeling for him always. Getting out of the car that night was like tearing my heart open, but I did it. I slammed the door hard.

"I hate you, Johnny Blythe!" I sobbed. "You don't know what you've done to me, but you'll find out! I'll pay you back!"

He looked scared, white. I suppose his family had also told him that a boy with money could get into plenty of trouble with a girl like me. He needn't have worried. I didn't mean a word of it. I wished that I did. I prayed that I might learn to hate him. But it is only in stories that a man lets a girl down and she stops caring like that. That night Johnny took the pitiful gift of my devotion and flung it back in my face. He taunted me with Mom—my poor Mom, who (I faced it now) probably hadn't been married at all. And still, my whole being cried out for him. Body and brain and heart and soul. . . .

Nothing ever hurt so much again. Not even the day Mr. Blythe came into the hot little room and thrust a check before me. Johnny had left for college. Johnny must have confessed everything, in a moment of boyish hysteria; afraid I'd make trouble for him. So his father was buying me off. "You don't know what you've done to me!" I'd sobbed. Well, that might have meant anything, mightn't it? I stared at the check and then down at the floor and wondered why I didn't die right there. But something else was stirring within me that day—hardness and under that, desperation.

"Five hundred dollars," I said softly, "for one heart—one life—one soul. Cheap at the price, isn't it? Johnny must have been frightened. He needn't have been. He's free, Mr. Blythe, free as air. But as long as you have so generously offered me this check, why, I shan't tear it up in little pieces and throw them at you. I shall keep it. Do you see that couch over there? A boy lay there all last night, coughing, and at dawn, there was blood flecking his lips, but he has a paper route and he went out anyway to deliver his papers. My mother doesn't know it, but he has tuberculosis. He's my little brother and he'll die unless we send him West. So thank you very much. I'll pay it back a little at a time. Anything you want me to sign?"

Mr. Blythe stared at me very hard. "No!" he snapped. "Your word—"

"You have my word." When he had gone, I caressed the check with fingers that trembled. Billy had never been well. Those racking hours last night when he'd coughed and coughed had left me weak and frightened. A bad cold, Mom thought—Mom, who was in church at this moment. The doctor had told me the truth. My breath was coming fast in funny, choked little gasps. "Sister's sending you West, old boy," I whispered aloud to a Billy who was not there, to a Billy who might not be anywhere unless something was done for him.

Keeping that check did something to me. It cheapened my memory of Johnny and crushed my self-respect. I knew that when Billy went to Arizona that fall and I started to pay back the money in fives and tens. I knew I'd done the unforgivable, but I can never describe even to myself how I felt that night I had listened to Billy coughing his lungs out—well, Billy was just my baby brother again and there wasn't one thing in this world that I wouldn't have done for him. I would have taken that check a thousand times over, whatever taking it killed inside of me. I would have lied, cheated, stolen, sold myself, anything. . . .

Maybe Johnny talked. Maybe the Blythes talked. Maybe it was the bank clerk who cashed the check. Somebody talked. That winter, the story was sub rosa gossip; old man Blythe buying off one Camilla Thorpe. It clung to me, trailed me, but I didn't care. I couldn't care as long as Mom didn't hear it; and I was betting on the fact that those nearest to you never do hear anything. What difference did a little undercurrent of scandal make to me when I'd given Johnny my heart to kick around and it was still bleeding? I used to stare at Mom nights as she sewed white collars on my black dresses or ironed blouses, and I'd remember that little town we had come from. What had happened to that brown little girl? To the blue-eyed boy? To the woman? The little girl had grown up to break her heart. The boy had tuberculosis in a sanitarium out West. And the woman? Mom would fling me that funny little grin of hers.

"Billy writes that he's lots better. We'd

oughta go out there, Cam, make him a visit."

"It's us—us three, old boy," I'd said once to Billy. "Wish we—could," I murmured to Mom now, my eyes blurring with tears. But we couldn't. Mom's days on the job were numbered. Soon I'd carry it alone; my brother, Mom, and paying back slowly that five hundred dollars. Mom thought that I had received a sort of bonus. She didn't know that it was the price of my sin—and hers, because if I hadn't been Mom's daughter, they wouldn't have put it up to Johnny to love me—and buy me off. . . .

THE hell I went through was my own. The times when I'd see men's eyes—bright, mocking, and appraising—linger over me and something in my soul would go sick and numb. The times when I'd thrust a money order for five dollars or ten dollars into a plain envelope, address it to Mr. Blythe and my mind would say, "You can pay it back but you can never blot out the fact that you took his father's money." I worried that Mom might find out some day where I'd got that money.

Well, I lived through it somehow. I never read about a hit and run driver that I didn't wonder dully why he couldn't have hit me instead of some happy, useful person. I was paying on a small insurance policy and I figured that I would be worth more to my family dead than alive. Surely I was worth very little to myself.

So nothing dramatic happened to end my life. Just the same old routine. My job. Billy's letters. Mom, losing her job. I, seeking friends again. After all, I had to. Some of them became remotely polite after a good look around, after meeting Mom and being faintly shocked by the rather awful room we shared. It had to be awful. Billy was a constant drain on my pay check. I sensed some talk drifting back from the years, too. Was Mom really *Mrs.* Thorpe? What had ever become of my father? Had I ever had a legal father? That sort of thing sprang from the scandal, the undercover scandal, that still clung to my name. Poor as I was, I'd been prominent enough in high school to attract quite a lot of attention and then I'd been Johnny Blythe's girl friend—and more, and he was prominent enough for six people. All through that winter stories drifted back about Johnny going simply haywire; drinking, flunking, staying in college by the skin of his teeth; and people laughed amusedly. Lots of the same people thought that I was undesirable. It always hurt when I saw people drawing away from me; men's sisters, their mothers, their girl friends. It hurt even more to go out with a man and realize with a dull, sickening thud that once more I'd been sized up as a sport, a hot number.

I was bitter—yes, and despairing and hopeless. Paying back the five hundred dollars got to be an obsession with me. I dug into my job, took some night courses on the side, and got a couple of raises. It took me a year to finish the payments, but I did it.

The summer I made peace with my conscience by writing off that debt was the summer I started living again. I shoved Johnny back into the past where he belonged. The year had been full of hurts, but there were some real things, too; a few real friends, girls and men, who took me as I was and loved me. And yes, another man. Jim Craig, in his thirties, a new salesman who'd come from upstate, a man who'd dated me and had never made a single play for me. That was one test. The second test was inviting him to one of Mom's dinners. She told the same old stories, piled food on the table any old way, and afterwards Jim said simply, "She's a swell woman, isn't she?" He meant it. Jim was an orphan who had worked out his board and room on a farm and he still had that same simplicity and sincerity that comes from close contact with the land. And he'd had a lonely enough struggle through his boyhood to recognize at first glance someone else's loneliness.

And so I fell in love with Jim. I didn't mean to, but the old hunger to be loved was stirring again. The old bruises weren't hurting so much. Slowly this time—frightened because I was, after all, a burned child—I crept closer and closer to Jim, ready to cringe back at a word. He never let me down once.

The pride that had kept me going became a happier pride. After all, I was like Mom. I wanted to like people! A sort of weight rolled off my soul that summer. It seemed to me that the forlorn little family of eleven years ago was coming through, after all. The doctors wrote that Billy's recovery was a sure thing. My boss said that I was the best secretary he'd ever had. I'd found friends—and my self-respect, and a man who said he loved me. I lost, too, the bar sinister of my birth and my own life. Whatever Mom had done, she had made up for it beautifully, gallantly. Whatever I had done. God must have forgiven me because I was being happy again, feeling clean again.

That's when it happened. It's always like that. Fight your way back, touch the heights for one sweet moment, and something's sure to pull you off them. Ilsa Blake asked Jim and me to a party. Ilsa was a stenographer in our office. Blond, brassy hair, dark sticky lashes—that kind. The story was that the doctors had given her about a year and so she'd made up her mind to take that year—fast.

I almost said, "No, thank you, Ilsa," but didn't. Ilsa might be cheap but she was probably unhappy and after all, I'd been hurt myself. I knew what it was like. So I accepted and wasn't even uneasy at the queer little smile that touched her painted mouth. I didn't know then that Ilsa had made a pass at Jim herself—and hated me, because Jim had turned her down. I learned that later.

HER SMILE WON HIM
...But her breath lost him
I HEAR TOMMY BLAKE FELL HARD FOR YOU TONIGHT, HELEN. LIKE HIM?
HE'S AWFULLY NICE! BUT HE ONLY DANCED WITH ME ONCE, PEG!
I THINK I KNOW WHY, HELEN...BUT IT'S HARD TO SAY IT! SOMETIMES YOUR BREATH...OH WHY DON'T YOU SEE THE DENTIST TOMORROW?
MY BREATH! WHY PEG, THAT CAN'T BE...BUT I'LL SEE DR. ELLIS
MISS WEST, TESTS PROVE THAT 76% OF ALL PEOPLE OVER THE AGE OF 17 HAVE BAD BREATH. AND TESTS ALSO PROVE THAT MOST BAD BREATH COMES FROM IMPROPERLY CLEANED TEETH. I ADVISE COLGATE DENTAL CREAM BECAUSE...
COLGATE DENTAL CREAM COMBATS BAD BREATH
"Colgate's special penetrating foam gets into every tiny hidden crevice between your teeth . . . emulsifies and washes away the decaying food deposits that cause most bad breath, dull, dingy teeth, and much tooth decay. At the same time, Colgate's soft, safe polishing agent cleans and brightens the enamel—makes your teeth sparkle, gives new brilliance to your smile!"
LATER—THANKS TO COLGATE'S
AND PEG, TOMMY AND I WANT YOU TO BE BRIDESMAID!
...AND NO TOOTHPASTE EVER MADE MY TEETH AS BRIGHT AND CLEAN AS COLGATE'S!
Now-NO BAD BREATH behind her SPARKLING SMILE!
Good Housekeeping Bureau
COLGATE RIBBON DENTAL CREAM
20¢ LARGE SIZE
Giant Size, over twice as much, 35¢

"I LIKE SOMETHING DIFFERENT"

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Beeman's
AIDS DIGESTION...

Jim and I were late to the party. Neither of us really wanted to go to it. We lingered over our coffee for hours and Jim asked for the tenth time, "Honey, do we *have* to go?"

I smiled at him. "She might be hurt, darling. Ilsa's a funny girl. I do pity her so, Jim!"

"Guess that's what I love in you, Cam," Jim said slowly. "The talent you have for pitying people. The way you are to your mother. It looks rather nice, you know, to a boy nobody pitied much when he needed that, a kid who never had a family."

WE showed up at the party two hours late. It was at the lights out stage. A strange man had opened the door for us, but at the sound of Jim's voice, Ilsa herself appeared in the doorway, her hair tumbled, her eyes blazing, and the narrow straps of her gown almost pushed off her shoulders. I was scared. Don't ask me why but I was scared to death even before she said, "Wait a minute, Cam. An old friend of yours is here tonight. He's been waiting for you. Come in, Johnny!"

Yes, it was Johnny, all right, staggering in from what must have been the bedroom. He was pretty drunk. Facing him there in that disordered, sordid room filled with overturned bottles, I felt something take me by the throat, squeeze all the breath and hope and life out of me. I can see them yet. Johnny and Ilsa, and some unknown couple on the divan.

"Cam!" Johnny said thickly. "Cam, old girl! Great to see you! This is—is the li'l gal, Ilsa. Told you 'bout her. Thought she was the sweetest—sweetest kid in the world till she shook my old man down for five hundred bucks. Folks said she was that kind. Well, it was worth it, wasn't it, Cam?" His hand went up to his forehead and he added almost soberly, "Or—was it?"

I know I was dead white. I know that my eyes were haunted, guilty. Ilsa looked triumphant. She'd wanted to show me up. She'd wanted fireworks with Johnny and me tonight. Well, she'd got them—and in front of Jim. I looked up at Jim. He'd gone grey.

Johnny came closer, eyes narrowing, lips loose and ugly. I remember that sick little prayer in my heart, "Oh, dear Father in heaven, don't let—this—be my Johnny! Please!" Then his hands reached out for me.

"God, you were sweet, Cam!" he muttered hoarsely. "So sweet! Couldn't get over you. Ate my heart out for you last fall. Called myself a cad to have treated you as I did. Wrote Dad that I was coming home Christmas to patch things up if I could and marry you. That's when he must've gone to you. And you must've thought, 'Johnny or five hundred bucks!' He got back the canceled check and sent it to me."

Tears streamed down my face. One betrayal leads straight to another, doesn't it? Mr. Blythe, or maybe just life, had trapped me and maybe had trapped Johnny, too.

"Did your father tell you I paid it back, every cent? No, of course he didn't! Did he tell you that my brother was dying of tuberculosis and that his check was just money I needed so badly? So badly, Johnny! I didn't take it for—for loving you and I can prove I paid it back. Johnny, don't be so bitter! I was but I've learned better...."

"Hard luck story," Johnny said sullenly. "Sob story. What if you did pay it back? You took it. Maybe—" his eye fell on Jim—"maybe you can afford to pay lots of things back now. You're not dumb. Your mother may have knocked around out West with a lunger who wouldn't marry her, but she taught her daughter better than that—"

Jim struck Johnny just once. I didn't realize what he had done until I saw Johnny lying there at my feet, his mouth bleeding.

I simply lost my head, had an attack of old-fashioned hysteria when Jim led me out. "He—can't—help it," I sobbed over and over. "They poisoned him against me. And it looks now as if they poisoned something else in him, too."

"I think I know a lot of your story, Cam," Jim said later on after I'd managed somehow to pull myself together. "I heard things about you. The rest I just knew—from your face, dear. Tell me everything some day when you feel like it. It won't make any difference, Cam."

"That's so—sweet, Jim dear," I whispered brokenly. "Some day—I will."

Funny, isn't it? I was all set to marry Jim before Ilsa's party. Now, I—don't know. It was after the party that the police picked up Johnny for a bad accident . . . driving while drunk . . . a woman killed. He got off with a suspended sentence, but Mr. Blythe stopped me one day in the bank and said, "Well, his mother and I stopped a romance that we thought was undesirable. Now I wish—he'd had you."

I went right on past him, lips trembling. There was still nothing to say. You can kill things so easily. Be very careful what you kill! Be sure that you want it dead; because after you've struck that last blow—well. you've done it, that's all. And not all your prayers and tears can wipe out what you've done. In a magazine story, I suppose that Johnny and I might have patched things up somehow. We didn't. A year ago Johnny killed the girl I was, and the woman who took her place loves Jim Craig and everything Jim stands for with all her heart. A year ago, Johnny loved me, but the seed of distrust planted in his heart then has grown to a terrible living thing. Today he still wants me and hates me because he lost me and so still talks. Mom will hear him some day. I live in fear of that.

Jim says we can go away. Billy will be out of the sanitarium next year; an arrested case as long as he never leaves the Southwest. Jim wants to take Mom and me out there to him. Well, of course, I should go down on my knees and thank God for Jim. He'll understand everything I write here. He knows that I shall never cut myself off from my own flesh and blood. Long ago, Mom said, "There's room in my life for my kids." Today I'm saying there's room in my life for her and for Billy. There has to be. Harsh money problems say so—as well as love. Jim and I could go out to Phoenix. I'd get a job out there. Mom would keep house for us. I wouldn't have a baby for a while, because there'd be this load to carry—too much for one man.

OH, I'm not afraid of that! Neither is Jim! But I'll tell you what I am afraid of. I'm afraid of things happening to me all my life like at Ilsa's party. I want to build something real and strong and fine. But will I always be building on shifting sands because I started wrong? Will I—I, who love Jim deeply—drag him down some day? Make him ashamed of me? That's what I want to know and until I can answer that, I can't answer Jim.

Jim says, "Everybody loses out somewhere. You're lucky if you just get what you want most. I want you most, Cam. Your pride, your tenderness, even your hurts."

And the other night, Mom said, "You and Jim will be fixin' to marry pretty soon and don't you worry none about havin' an old woman around. I'll go out to Billy by myself and git a job. I ain't too old." Her shaking fingers touched my hair. "You're a fine girl; smart, pretty, good—all I wanted you to be. I ain't of much account and never was. Always meant to tell you that some day. I—never—was. So there ain't a thing in the world you owe me."

"Mom!" I sobbed. "Don't! You're the finest—best—" The words choked me. Mom stepping out of my life. Mom trying to tell me, perhaps, the scandal of my birth that I

had guessed long ago. And smiling a little; that old, valiant grin of hers. They were wrong when they said neither Billy nor I looked like her. I'd seen that same grin on Billy's twisted mouth the night he'd said, "Doc says my number's up, Cammy. Don't you worry. They say you never know what hits you—when you die."

Yes, I'm leaving this town before they tear down Mom's pride in me! I'm taking a chance on giving Jim so much love, loyalty, and tenderness that I'll make up for what I can never give him. That is, if he'll give me that chance. And don't think that what I can't give him—a clean name, a clean past, a future without strings—hasn't cost me a lot in tears, agony, and sleepless nights.

Jim dear, this is my answer. Read it carefully. Think it over and whatever you do about me—if you just go away and forget me—I'll understand. But if you still want me with all that's made me, the good things and the bad things, if you can understand that my affair with Johnny involved a boy who's dead just as it involved a girl who's dead, if you can take me just as I am with my sin and my atonement and Mom who never was married and Billy who may never be strong—Jim, can you? My dear, my dear, is it fair? I'm half afraid to leave the answer up to you. I know your generous heart. And I know I would never have the strength to send you away. . . .

And so, dear Lord, if I marry Jim, then please, please, let me only make him happy! This is one prayer that rises from my heart.

Shotgun Wedding

(*Continued from page 25*)

do. But I knew I must do something decisive which would prove indisputably to Daddy that the girl he had seen was not I. Otherwise he might do something desperate.

I walked down our street rapidly. Had the neighbors at each side of us heard our angry voices? Had there been any clue in what we were yelling at each other?

I walked for blocks. The cold air stung my face. I didn't even notice it. I walked and walked, until, somehow, I found myself across the tracks in Hunky Town.

I sneered inwardly. Hunky Town! If Daddy hadn't been such a blackguard himself, he'd never have been down there to catch me. And suddenly I remembered Kathleen Timini. Why, if Kathleen said it wasn't I—Daddy would be convinced.

On the spur of the moment I decided to call on Kathleen and tell her that Daddy had accused me unjustly. What made me so sure that she would help me? I remembered the time I had seen her, when I had been twelve years old, and Spike McClure had been smiling down at me . . . She was full of life, I remembered. She seemed good-natured and easy-going. She might believe me. And she could convince Daddy.

IT was a funny situation, I thought with a twisted smile, as I rang the bell of Kathleen's flat. A passing urchin had told me where she lived. Dingy and dirty, the place was. But I was too taken up with the quirks of my position to care much.

To think of it! I, Arline Wyatt, whose mother had raised her up so carefully—for whose sake Mother had gone through so much—I was now coming to the cause of all Mother's miseries . . . Kathy Conover, Daddy's "friend"—and I was going to beg her to help me! What was worse, I knew perfectly well that she would be more help to me than Mother could be.

I pressed the button twice. My heart sank. Perhaps she was not home! But in a moment I heard footsteps. The door was flung open before I could compose my face.

"What is it?" It was not Kathy who had opened the door, but a man.

"Is Mrs. Timini at home?"

Then, looking up at the man more closely, I saw that he was far too young to be Kathy's husband. There was something elusively familiar about him.

For his part, he stared at me. "Yes, she's here. Won't you come in?" As he held the door wide, he looked down at me with puzzled interest. He followed me through the long dark hall to the kitchen, where Kathy was sitting in a chair.

She sprang to her feet. "Why—it's Arline!" She was surprised to see me, and yet she seemed to be as intimate and familiar with me as if I came there to see her every day.

I said quickly, "I didn't think you'd remember me."

A queer light gleamed in her eyes for just a minute. "Sure I do. You've met Spike McClure before, you know." There was wicked amusement suddenly in the corners of her lips. "I rescued you from his gang once."

So that was why he had seemed familiar! Unconsciously, my eyes strayed to his face. He had been staring at me. How blue his eyes were! Suddenly I remembered that I had thought the same thing that other time.

An unspoken question in Kathy's expression prodded me. I said, "I—er—I—wanted to talk to you—" I was furious with myself for losing my poise. After all, who was she but a loose-moraled middle-aged hussy, even if my father did seem so tied to her? And who was Spike but a Hunky Town tough? Why should I be so disconcerted to have called on them? Even if I wanted a favor from her . . . which I didn't exactly . . .

Spike got up quickly, his face flushed. "I've got to beat it, Kathy. See you later."

"Be sure to come back, Spike," she said. After he had gone, she turned to me.

"What can I do for you, Arline?"

Hating myself, desperately wanting to seem at ease and in control of myself, nevertheless all I could do was twist a handkerchief nervously. My mouth was dry.

She was kindly, though. She waited until I said, "Mrs. Timini, my father came home very excited this morning." I forced my unwilling eyes to look straight into hers. "He has some crazy notion that he saw me this morning in a car with a man. He—he says it was in front of a rooming house and you—er—were there too. And saw me."

She was watching me narrowly. "Yes?"

My eyes did not waver. "Daddy has the wild idea that the girl he saw was I. He—he's threatening to tear up the town and—and have a shotgun wedding."

"What do you want me to do?"

I put my hand out appealingly. Please, Mrs. Timini, if you were there—you must know that the girl wasn't I! I never—I—"

"Stop that, Arline. It was you, all right."

"No, no, it wasn't, Mrs. Timini!"

She took my hand. "Don't be a goose, Arline. I tell you I know it was you. And I know you've been seeing that James kid every week-end for a long time. Do you think the town has no eyes?"

"But I was home. Ask my mother."

"I'd have a nice face to ask your mother, now, wouldn't I? Besides, what's all this got to do with me?"

"I'm telling you! Daddy wants to kill Peyton, or make me marry him, and—and—" I burst into tears. "He'll have the whole mess smeared all over town and everybody

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will laugh at me! And it's not at all true."

"Aha!" cried Kathy with relish. "So that's what you thought. You thought you'd get me to say I knew exactly who the girl was, and it wasn't you." She smiled at me. She did not seem angry or shocked, but only tolerant. "No, kiddy. I'm not going to say it. I'd like to do you the favor, but it won't be good for you. Come here, sit down. Let me tell you something."

SHE pushed me gently into a chair. She leaned toward me. "Lots of people talk about me, and I'll admit they've had plenty of morsels to roll on their tongues. I made a mistake when I was about your age, and I kept on making mistakes—but you'll be sorry if you do the same thing, kid! I'm not preaching to you. You'll go on and make your own mistakes no matter what I or anyone else tells you. But I can say this much: if this boy got you to spend the night with him, you must care about him. You're not the kind, Arline, who'd do it just because you thought it smart, or because you were drunk, or anything like that. You're in love with him and he's in love with you. Be glad you've got this chance to marry him! You can't go on and forget what's happened. It's too important."

"But I tell you—I didn't—"

"Hush, Arline. Don't lie any more. You can't get away from the truth. We know it was you. Your Dad's right. I'll do what I can to make him take it easier—but he's one hundred per cent right in wanting the boy to marry you."

I abandoned pretense. I cried, "But I don't want to marry Peyton! It will be the worst thing if we're forced into it."

Kathy surveyed me calmly. "Why?"

I couldn't explain. I couldn't put it into words. My mind was a confused welter of memory. I remembered my disappointment, my feeling of having been cheated. I remembered Peyton's puzzled and stupid attitude. How our whole house of magic cards had tumbled! I almost hated him now. I felt that I never wanted to see him again.

My flesh crept in humiliation at the thought of a shotgun wedding. Peyton had asked me to marry him. But to have him dragged to the altar by an indignant father . . . No! Never!

I said good-bye to her abruptly, and left the flat. I dreaded going home, because Daddy might not have drunk himself unconscious, but might only have reached the ugly, quarrelsome stage. I would be better off outside that house.

It was growing dark, the swift early dark of winter evenings. Walking along, my head down, my fists jammed into the pockets of my sport coat, I hated life.

Perversely, just because they all wanted so badly to railroad me into marriage, the very idea of it grew more and more repugnant. No, I wouldn't marry Peyton James!

The picture of Peyton, looking at me so blankly that morning because I wasn't happy and satisfied, the way he had expected me to be, came back to mind. I remembered how he had lain his head on my breast once, like a small boy turning to his mother for comfort. No! I wanted someone strong and self-reliant, someone *grown up!*

And with that crystallization of what I really wanted from life, my rebellion became a steel-hard determination. I would not marry Peyton James if a thousand Daddies with shotguns tried to force me!

But how to avoid it? Swift as light, my mind shouted the answer. "Run away!"

I was young and strong and inside me burned fierce courage. I'd run away!

I had been walking more and more rapidly, in pace with the tempo of my thoughts. I was not noticing the people I passed or the streets I was crossing.

Suddenly, a second after I had stepped

down from the curb into the gutter, I heard a shrill cry and the screech of brakes slammed on hard. Tires skidded. I stood there, paralyzed. The front bumper of a big car was not more than half an inch from my still body. An instant later, and the car would have mowed me down.

It was all over. The car was standing perfectly still, and an angry man was getting out from behind the wheel, shouting at me. I couldn't control the reaction; I wanted to stop shaking, but I couldn't. By the time the man reached my side, I was a pale and quivering fool who couldn't make a sound.

He started to say, "For God's sake, why don't you look where—" And then he cried, "You!"

I could only stare back at him dumbly. Spike McClure, who only an hour or so ago had left me in Kathy Conover's flat! He put his arm around my shoulder. "Stop shaking so, kid. I didn't nick you, did I?"

Very gently, evidently realizing how upset I was, he piloted me back to the car. He settled me in the front seat and got in beside me.

He started the car, and we were moving away from the small group of chattering people who had seen my close call.

"You want to go somewhere quiet, don't you? I—I guess you'd rather not ride around."

"My taste for cars is gone," I admitted.

"I—how about going to a movie or something? I mean—it'll be quiet, dark and—"

"And there's nowhere else," I finished.

"Maybe you'd like to go home?"

"No." I looked at him swiftly. "Daddy's been drinking. You know Daddy?"

"Yeah. I mean, yes. Pretty well."

"Then you've got an idea what he's like when he's drinking. And mad, too. Furious."

Spike McClure asked me no embarrassing questions about why my daddy was mad.

HIS eyes never left the windshield. He was silent, yet some solid warmth seemed to flow from him to me. I could almost feel his sympathy for me.

"You must have thought me a tough number," he said, "that time when Kathy chased me away. You looked so frightened." He smiled. "I've often thought of how scared you looked."

"I wasn't scared."

"No? I'm glad. I didn't mean to hurt you—I—well—say, you were the first girl I ever saw who—well—you know, the girls in our school didn't wear their hair that way. And their dresses—"

I smiled at him. "Thank you. I remember now. You told me then that I was pretty."

His ears grew a fierce red. "Did I say that? I was a crusty little guy."

The bright lights of the moving picture house were close now. But somehow, I didn't want to get out of the car and go in. "I'm all over my fright. Let's not go."

"Shall I take you home, then?"

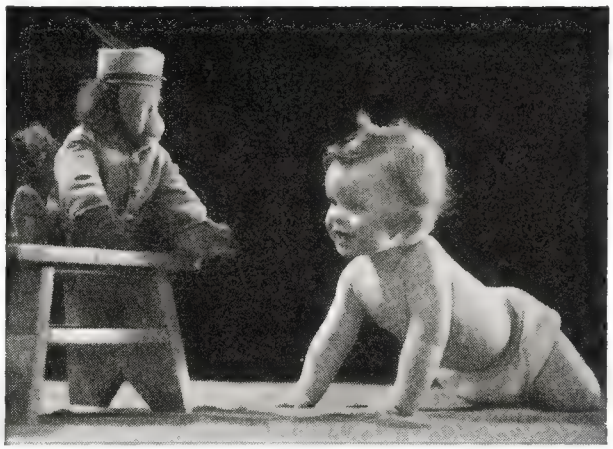
"No. I—I—Maybe I'm keeping you. You were going somewhere when—when I walked in front of the car?"

"No place important." For a moment the warmth and understanding was gone. "Look here, are you sure you want me—I mean—don't you want to—"

"Please stay with me for a few minutes!" I begged him. "I was upset, and everything all together just—I never would have done such a dumb thing as walk in front of a car if I hadn't been so wrapped up in my troubles."

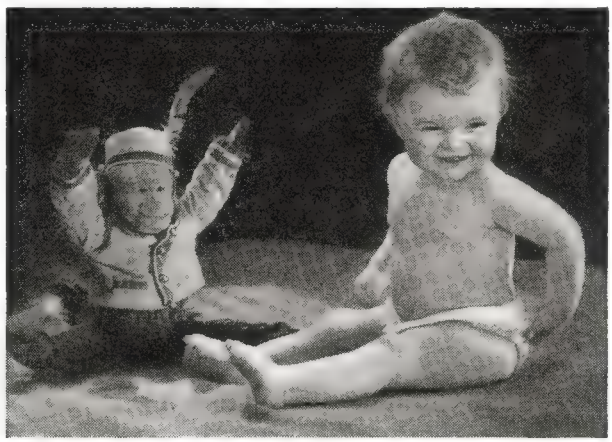
"What's the matter, Arline?" he asked me quietly. "Maybe if you told me what's on your mind it would help."

I clasped my hands together tightly. My rebellion, the hot resentment and dogged determination that I would not be railroaded into marriage, flared up again. I cried, "How would you feel if everybody was trying to make you do something you didn't



● *"Gee, I'd hate to be you, Jocko! That get-up may be peachy for collecting pennies, but you couldn't hire me to wear it on a day like this. The prickly heat breaks right out on my neck to think of it!"*

● *"Boss won't let you take it off, eh? Well, that's life... many's the time I've been rammed into a sweater. Only thing makes 'em bearable is Johnson's Baby Powder. It always fixes those prickles!"*



● *"I could stand a sprinkle myself—this carpet's itchy... How about some soft silky Johnson's Baby Powder for both of us, Mother? Jocko will do his best monkey-shines for you. And I'll do mine!"*

● *"Did you ever notice how fine Johnson's Baby Powder is? Just like satin! It keeps my skin like satin, too!"... Clear, unblemished skin is the best protection against skin infections, Mothers! Johnson's Baby Powder helps prevent prickly heat, rashes and chafes. It's made only of finest Italian talc—no orris-root. Try Johnson's Baby Soap and Baby Cream, too—and for tiny babies, the new Johnson's Baby Oil, which is stainless, pleasantly fragrant, and cannot turn rancid.*

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want to do? I—I—they think they can run me! Nobody can tell me what to do."

He said thoughtfully, "All depends on what they're trying to make you do."

"Daddy wants me to marry someone. He—he says he'll kill the boy if he doesn't marry me. But I don't want to marry him!"

Spike turned to look at me gravely. "Your Daddy . . ."

I said carelessly, "Oh, he's got a crazy notion he saw me in a car with this boy this morning, leaving a rooming house. But he's wrong! It wasn't I."

Spike said, "Go a little slower. Your father thinks he saw you and this guy—"

"This morning," I repeated impatiently. "Leaving a rooming house."

"Did Kathy see you, too?"

"It wasn't I," I said flatly.

"Um." He looked out the windshield.

"Oh, I don't know why I'm telling you all this, Mr. McClure."

"Call me Spike. I—I'm not exactly used to being mister."

"Spike."

"Well, the way I see it, your father—he's been pretty careful about his daughter."

"More careful than about himself!"

"There are some things that look worse than they are. Kathy's my aunt, you know. I—I'm in on a lot of things most people don't know. And that—" his eyes were flaming again, "that about her and your dad. Well, it's the goods. They—they really—"

"They really what? They're really in love with each other, you mean? What did she run away for, then, before my father ever married my mother? Why did she—"

He frowned. "I don't know all those things, Arline. Kathy's pretty close mouthed about some things. But I do know she—she's all wrapped up in your father. Her way is different from other people's, maybe. She likes good times and—and—"

"Liquor!"

"Well, maybe. She's full of pep. She just hasn't got the same slant other people have. If she couldn't have a good time and laugh and joke and raise hell, she just wouldn't want to live, that's all."

"Your mother was her sister?" I asked.

"Yes."

"But you're not like her. I mean—" I fumbled to explain that even the little toughie who'd bent over me that day on the curb in Hunky Town had had something serious about him. Now, in this car beside him, he was grave and thoughtful.

"I'm like my old man," Spike said shortly. I had the definite feeling that the subject was closed.

AFTER a while he ventured, "So you're not going to marry the boy?"

"No!" I exploded violently. "Never! Daddy's getting himself all drunk and worked up, and I just know he's going to go to the Jameses' house and shoot off his mouth about me being ruined. But I don't care! I won't marry Peyton. I won't!" I looked steadily at Spike. "When I walked in front of your wheels, it was because I had just made up my mind to run away."

"Oh, no, Arline! You mustn't do that!"

"It's better than staying here and being forced to marry Peyton. We—we didn't do anything wrong. That girl Daddy and Kathy saw wasn't I!" I had said it over so many times that I almost believed it.

"Running away isn't going to fix things, Arline. How old are you?"

"Eighteen," I said sulkily.

"You're not. You're less than that."

"How do you know?"

"You couldn't have been over twelve that day . . . and that's been four years ago."

"How well you remember it," I said, thinking it odd.

"Yes." His jaw was a stubborn line. "And you're too young to run away from home. I'm going to take you straight back to your father. He knows me. I'm going to make him lay off you and this Peyton guy. If you say you didn't do it, you didn't."

My heart sank a little. I had lied to everyone, but Daddy and Kathy had been too smart. They knew life and young people—too well, perhaps. This boy with the very blue, grave eyes, and stern mouth—this strange Hunky Town boy who was not like a Hunky Towner at all—he believed me at once. I felt strangely ashamed to have lied to him, yet I couldn't take the lie back. I wriggled on the seat uncomfortably. I wondered if Spike had ever been crazily in love with a girl as I had been with Peyton. . . . How far away and unreal seemed the passion that had swept us on then! I had been driven by wild urges singing in my blood, by shameless desires insidiously creeping into even my dreams. But the madness was quite gone, now. Did this happen to all people? Had it happened to Spike?

He knew the street on which our house was located without being told. We turned into it. As we came closer, I caught his arm. There was a car in front of our house.

"Come in with me, please." I was trembling. "Daddy must have gone to the Jameses' house and raised Cain. That's Mr. James' car now."

WORDLESSLY, Spike helped me out of his car, and we mounted the steps. We had barely crossed the porch when we heard voices—Daddy and Peyton's father! They were wrangling bitterly.

"Your daughter's a fine piece of baggage! She's been enticing him to leave school, week after week. We got letters from the dean about his car and about his low grades and then they discovered he was sneaking away every week. We never saw him! He came here! You opened your house to him."

"That's a damn lie! I knew nothing about it! Your precious son has been the one who's led my daughter on the wrong path. He knew what he was doing, all right. Thought he was smart, the vile little scum!"

"Don't you dare to call my boy names! He's a decent, respectable youngster, and if your girl had let him alone—"

"He'll marry her!" roared my father. "He'll fix things up. Don't think he's going to get away with it."

"Peyton is engaged to marry Mary Giles," said Mr. James coldly. "Regardless of you and your well known family."

"I'll knock your head off, you—you—"

Mr. James was evidently backing away from Daddy, for he came into the hall then, where we open-mouthed eavesdroppers on the porch could see him. He said, "I'm not going to stay here and bandy words with you, Tom Wyatt. I know you and what you've been doing all these years, and how can your daughter be much better? If you thought you'd trap Peyton into marriage, you're all wrong. Haul him into court if you want to! Go on, I'll fight you to the last ditch! My son's life won't be ruined—"

I pulled at Spike's arm. "I can't go in there now. Please take me away."

His face was pale. He said slowly, "I'd like to take a swing at that bird."

"No, please. Don't you see—he doesn't want his son to marry me—and I don't want to marry his son. It's only Daddy and his—his mistaken—honor." I couldn't help sobbing then. His fingers closed over mine. "Don't cry, Arline."

Spike and I turned and ran back to his car. I didn't care where we went, so long as I didn't have to go back home to face Daddy's mounting wrath and the cool contempt that had shown in Peyton's father's voice.

But we couldn't ride around in the car all night. Dully, over a sandwich and coffee in a lunchwagon, Spike admitted that. "Say, why not go to Kathy's?"

"Kathleen Conover's? No." I thought of

her flat with distaste. "Besides, Daddy's probably there. He always stamps out of the house when he's mad and goes there."

"I could take you to a girls' Y," he said.

"No, no. I—I don't want to go to a Y."

"Then the only place left is my own dump. You can't—I mean—"

I thought of having his comforting presence to lean on for a few more hours. . . . I clung to him. "Please take me there, Spike."

He scowled. "Your father would be coming after *me* with a shotgun, then."

"If you won't take me with you, just leave me here. I'll be all right." I looked at him defiantly. "I'm never going home, I can tell you that. I'll run away."

"You know I won't leave you! Come on, we'll go to my place." But he was worried. "You can have the bedroom. I'll sleep on my old cot." Still, even as he fitted the key into the lock, he was uneasy. "I should have taken you to the Y," he kept saying.

The flat he took me to was not at all the kind called a "bachelor's apartment." It was only a few blocks away from Kathy's flat.

"Mom fixed the place up," he explained. "And since she—since she's gone, I've just kinda hung on to it."

There was a shabby couch in the living room. Old-fashioned, cheap paper lamp shades. Worn rugs. The bedroom held a brass bed, covered with a patchwork quilt.

"I—this used to be Mom's room. I had a cot. I'll open it in the living room."

"You're so kind to me, Spike!" I said, smiling at him. I struggled to find the right words for what I wanted to say. He was not like Peyton, well bred and educated. He did not have such good manners, either. His clothes were different. I could not quite trace the things which made the difference, but it was unmistakably there. Something about his shirt and tie and suit was wrong—something made them look cheap and loud.

And yet, Hunky Towner though he was, he was kind and gentle. Like a solid rock; reliable, steady, trustworthy.

Hunting in my mind for the words, I blushed. It would be tactless to say, "You may not be a gentleman, but you've been so good to me!" I couldn't. Spike McClure *was* a gentleman in all that counted.

On the kitchen table were a pack of cards and two empty glasses. Under the table I glimpsed a liquor bottle. He got the cards and glasses out of sight hastily. "Some of the fellows were over last night."

"What do you do for a living, Spike?"

"Oh, lots of things." But I could see that my question had made him uncomfortable. I persisted, "What's your regular job?"

HE looked down at his hands. "I wanted to be a mechanic," he said. "I thought I'd get a kick out of that. But my folks died when I was only—" He stopped himself. "Aw, what's the difference? I've got enough money to buy breakfast with," and he grinned likably.

"Well," he said suddenly, "I guess it's time to turn in. I can't oblige you with any ladies' nightgowns, but I've got some pajamas you can wear. They'll go around you twice."

I closed the bedroom door, the pajamas he had given me in my hand.

"Lock it if you want to," he said. But I disdained to lock it.

The doorbell rang. "Gosh! Who's that? If the fellows—" Muttering, he went to open the door. I stood on the cold floor in the bedroom, shivering. I prayed that it would not be some of his friends.

He was at the door an awfully long time. I decided that he was trying to get rid of the boys. I got into bed, for my feet had been very cold, and pulled the covers high around me. The bedroom door was open just a wee crack.

Then I heard a woman's voice saying,

How could he tell her

why their Marriage had failed?

How could he say—"You've been careless about feminine hygiene"? Husbands can't be expected to know about "Lysol".

IT WOULD be so much easier, she thought, if he'd burst into a *rage*, instead of this indifferent kindness that hurt her so.

Family doctors—and too many husbands—know that one of the causes of discord between husband and wife is neglect of the feminine hygiene that is so necessary for intimate cleanliness.

If you are in any doubt regarding a wholesome, cleanly method of feminine hygiene, ask your doctor about "Lysol" disinfectant. It is recommended by many physicians and is used in many hospitals, for many antiseptic needs. Here are good reasons why:

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1. NON-CAUSTIC . . ."Lysol", in the proper dilution, does not hurt or harm normal tissue. It contains no harmful free caustic alkali.

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--- MEN NEVER NOTICED HER

PROFESSIONALLY POSED

Now It's Smooth, Younger Looking

--- AND SHE'S ENGAGED

MAYBE THIS GIRL'S EXPERIENCE WILL HELP YOU TOO

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Dear Sirs: Your Tayton's Cream is wonderful. I am 23. My skin was terribly dry, scaly and rough and lines were making me look 40 years old. After using Tayton's Cream for cleansing and also as a night cream for two days it made my skin so smooth and soft I could hardly believe how much younger I looked. I met a wonderful boy who told me I had a beautiful skin. We are now engaged. I am so thrilled I can't thank Tayton's Cream enough. Mary Shireman

Here's The Amazing Beauty Cream That's Thrilling All America

Skin beauty is the soul of romance—the power to attract . . . At last science has found a way to help nature restore smooth, soft, younger looking skin. Like the oils of youth, this new beautifier TAYTON'S CREAM releases precious ingredients, which are tripled whipped and quickly aid nature to combat Dryness, Roughness, Lines, Premature Wrinkles, Blackheads and Pimples. Melts away dry, scaly, dead skin. Stimulates underskin. Rouses oil glands. Frees clogged pores. Cleanses, Lubricates, Smooths. Brings out new, live, fresh skin. Beauty editors are writing about it! Thousands praise it!

Make This Guaranteed 3 Day Test

Give your skin these thrilling new beauty benefits. Use TAYTON'S CREAM to cleanse with and also as a night cream for 3 days. It must make your skin softer, smoother, look younger and satisfy completely, or your money will be refunded.

Ask for TAYTON'S CREAM at drug, department and 10c stores. If your dealer can not as yet supply you, insist he order for you from his wholesaler or headquarters.

At Drug, Dept. And 10c Stores

TAYTON "An Old English Name"

"Spike, I know you too well! What's the matter, have you got somebody here you can't leave? Come on, now." My heart seemed to stop beating. That was Kathy's voice! And she was coming in the house!

Her next words explained why she had come. "Tom's nastier than I've ever seen him before. That girl of his isn't home yet, and now he swears she's run away. He told me his wife is crying her eyes out, and Lord knows, he's been swilling liquor till he's a demon. He won't leave my flat. If Tony finds him there, there'll be hell to pay."

"All right," said Spike nervously, "I'll get him out of there. Wait in the hall for me."

Kathy's voice deepened, full of suspicion. "What's eating you? You didn't want me to come in. You—Sa—ay! If you've got a dame in the bedroom . . . No, that's not like you." She took a quick, unexpected step toward the room where I cowered in bed. She opened the door.

In panic I pulled the covers up higher and tried to conceal myself, but I could not hide from her eyes.

"Arline Wyatt!" she gasped.

Will Arline find a friend or a foe in the woman whose strange hold on her father has darkened her childhood and wrecked her mother's life? Can she trust Spike McClure's generous solicitude? And what may she expect from a father dangerously enraged by her violation of a code he himself has trampled upon? "Shotgun Wedding," the story of a girl in the grip of forces far older and greater than she, continues in the

October MODERN ROMANCES—On Sale Everywhere September 1st

The Birthright I Scorned

(*Continued from page 29*)

"Couldn't afford it?" I finished when she hesitated. "Well, my lady, this party's on me. You *are* sick. Something has to be done."

With pretended gayety I picked the brave little soul up and put her in my car, and the next moment we were speeding toward the hospital. There, the doctors took one look at her and ordered an emergency operation. Acute appendicitis, they said.

She turned to me with troubled eyes. "Taffy— She'll be frightened—"

"I'll go to Taffy right away," I promised.

Taffy took the news like the little soldier she was.

"I want to go to her," she said simply.

So I took Taffy to the hospital, but I couldn't leave her there alone. Mrs. Willis was already in the operating room, so there was nothing we could do but wait.

And in that hour I learned more of human bravery than I had ever known existed. Taffy sat huddled in one corner of the big divan in that dreary waiting room, making no sound, shedding no tears, but the futile clasping and unclasping of her hands told me the agonies she was suffering.

To make conversation, I asked: "What are you doing now, Taffy?"

"I've been working in a dime store ever since I got out of high school," Taffy said. "Mother worked her fingers almost to the bone to get me through school, and I always planned for her to quit as soon as I got a job, but she argued we ought to get something ahead first. We've been buying the house where we live, but I wish now I'd made her stop work anyway. I wish—"

"Don't, Taffy." Somehow, I found myself beside her, her trembling fingers in my clasp. "Don't blame yourself, Taffy. You couldn't have prevented this—" I was remembering the little Taffy, busily helping her mother in our kitchen, was awed by the closeness these two must have known all these years. Awkwardly, I fumbled on: "Let's not worry too much, Taffy. Your mother has a splendid vitality, and I'm sure she's going to be all right."

I slipped my arm around her shoulders. For just a minute her little body remained tense and rigid, and then she relaxed a little and leaned back against me. Her fingers curled about mine with a trusting gesture, as if Taffy felt that my presence were really something she could lean upon.

And that sensation was at once the most satisfying and the most frightening feeling that had come to me in my whole lifetime!

Mrs. Willis came through her operation better than either of us had dared hope, and after she had regained partial consciousness I left Taffy and a competent nurse in charge of her, and went home.

Not once, during the whole of the night, did I remember that I had a date with Rene.

But Rene threw a fit when I did see her.

"I suppose you stood me up for that brassy blonde you've been hanging around."

"I told you I was at the hospital."

"*Sitting up with the cook!*" The sarcasm in her voice was a foot deep. "Aren't you capable of anything better than that?"

"It's the truth," I maintained.

"But surely you didn't stay there *all* night. Why didn't you come later?"

"You wouldn't have stood for that—not with your pretended scruples."

Rene called me names then, and I called her some, but in the end she began to cry and begged my forgiveness. "I didn't mean to be jumpy and cross, Tommy, honest I didn't. I guess it's my nerves—I've been working too hard lately. And I know you're really sweet—that's why I get so jealous, I guess."

I WENT down to the dime store and arranged for the manager to notify Taffy that she might take a leave of absence, with pay, during her mother's illness.

When Mrs. Willis was ready to leave she scorned the ambulance and let me carry her to my car and take her home, though she laughingly protested over the extravagant elegance of the lacy negligee I bought her.

"Shame on you, Tommy. Such a frivolous thing for an old woman!"

"Would you rather have Taffy exchange it for something else?" I asked uncertainly.

"Of course not, you silly boy," Mrs Willis assured me. "It's a beautiful negligee, and I love it. Only sometimes it doesn't seem right—you spending so much on me."

"Of course it's right. Haven't you been good to me for years and years and years?" I argued. But I wondered, down in my heart, if I'd have given Mrs. Willis a second thought if it hadn't been for Taffy.

Taffy seemed glad to see me whenever I dropped in at the cottage, and several times when her mother was napping we strolled out into the garden and sat down on the grass, looking at the stars and talking idly.

Though I hadn't touched her since that night at the hospital, I never came near her without wanting to put my arms around her and draw her slender little body close to me. But somehow, I was afraid to try it.

One night, however, her sweetness was too much for me, and I reached out and pulled her gently close, bent and touched my lips to hers. Her body quivered in my arms, her mouth was soft and warm. That touch of her was fire to my undisciplined senses. It

made my head reel, my body glow, brought to a point the white-hot needles of desire that had been pricking me so long.

"Taffy, delicious, sweet little Taffy," I murmured as I bent to her lips again, "you do like me, don't you? You—"

"Of course I like you," she answered simply. "You've been so good to Mother."

And that spoiled it all. Though I had been accustomed to buying favors, I knew suddenly that it couldn't be that way with Taffy and me. I wanted Taffy more than I had ever wanted anything in my life, but she had to want me too, had to want me for myself alone. I sat up suddenly.

"No, Taffy," I said as gently as I could. "I don't want gratitude. I won't pretend that I haven't done some of those things for your mother because of you, but you aren't being asked to pay for them."

"Don't, Tommy!" Taffy cried out then, and surprised me by starting to cry. "I didn't mean to say that to you—I think of it a lot, and you'll never know how glad I've been that you did give Mother all those things. It's the only taste of luxury she's ever had in all her life, and of course I'm grateful—but that hasn't a thing in the world to do with the way I feel about you."

"Why, Taffy!"

"It's the truth," she went on in a tense little voice. "Ever since we were children and you pulled my pigtails and teased me, I've tried to hate you—and I couldn't. When we were in high school I even took some classes because I knew you would be in them—but you never even saw me there. I used to encourage Mother to tell me the things she heard about how well you were doing in college—and I went to your house lots and lots of times, just so I could get a look at you—"

"Taffy—you didn't? I never saw you."

"I stood back of the stairs," she admitted, and then she gave a little gasp, suddenly surprised at her own audacity.

I was trembling all over, shaken with my desire for Taffy, and the astounding revelation she had just made. "But you—meant that, didn't you, dear?" I had to ask.

"Yes, Tommy," her voice was low, "but I didn't want you to know—ever."

I gathered her up in my arms again, sought her temples, her lips. "Ah, Taffy, dear, don't you know I love you?"

Taffy's love was glorious, sweet and fine. Holding her in my arms that night, I made a silent vow to begin a new life—to leave the old one and all its associations behind.

FOOLISH promises. Deep-set habits are broken only by those with strong characters and mine was pitifully weak. The first time Patsy called me up, I refused her invitation, but the next time I had nothing to do, and I told myself I needn't break off all my old connections in one slash.

You see how it was. Over and over I'd make resolutions, and then I'd let them break down, a little at a time. I didn't intend to go near Rene again, but when we accidentally met one day and she insisted upon seeing me that night, I went.

Probably I have pictured Rene here in an entirely unfavorable light, but I shouldn't have, for when she was in one of her charming moods she more than made up for any little disagreeable moments.

So I drifted into a comfortable double life. On one side, Rene, Patsy, all the gay friends and jolly parties of my bachelorhood; on the other, Taffy, and all the young sweetness of her love.

Taffy was the same good scout she had been in our childhood. When I was in an amorous mood she could be the most feminine thing a man ever held in his two arms.

But Taffy realized there are other sides to a man besides the physical one. She had a good mind, read good magazines and books and discussed them intelligently.

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No Grease ··· No Fuss ··· Vanishes and Checks Perspiration Instantly

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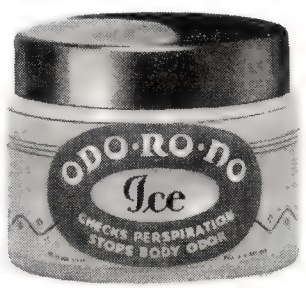

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NON-GREASY

SEND 10¢ FOR INTRODUCTORY JAR

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I enclose 10¢ (15¢ in Canada) to cover cost of postage and packing for generous introductory jar of Odorono Ice.

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SAFE ADVICE TO MODERN WOMEN

CONSULT DOCTOR IF IN DOUBT

FEMININE HYGIENE EXPLAINED

1. Happy and fortunate is the woman who finds the right answer to this grave problem . . . Happy when she knows of a method of Feminine Hygiene that is modern, safe, effective—and dainty . . . *Fortunate in being free from dangerous germs!*

2. Fear and ignorance are unnecessary. Medical research now brings you *dainty, snow white* suppositories for Feminine Hygiene. Smart women appreciate the convenience and *safety* of Zonitors. For Zonitors embody the famous *ZONITE ANTISEPTIC PRINCIPLE.* They kill dangerous germs, yet are free from "burn danger" to delicate tissues.

3. Zonitors are *safe* and *easy* to use... *greaseless, snow white* suppositories, each in a *sanitary* glass vial . . . no clumsy apparatus . . . *completely deodorizing. Easy to remove* with plain water. Instructions in package. All U. S. and Canadian druggists.

4. For your douche, after using Zonitors, we recommend Zonite. Its antiseptic qualities, proven by over 20 years of continuous use, promote feminine cleanliness—assures additional protection. Use 2 tablespoons of Zonite to 1 quart of water.

FREE Booklet containing latest medical information. Write to Zonite Products Corp., 944, New Brunswick, N. J.

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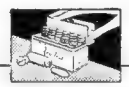

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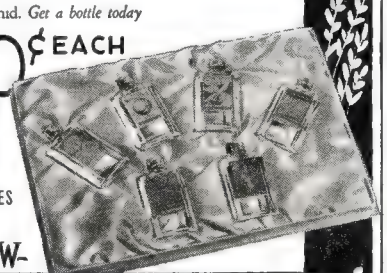
Summer is toilet water time. On warm days nothing is quite so refreshing and stimulating as RONNI Toilet Water. Six popular odors from which to choose—Gardenia, Lilac, Lily of the Valley, Lavender, Sweet Pea and Orchid. *Get a bottle today*

10¢ EACH



AT ALL 10¢ STORES

NEW-

TOILET WATERS

BY Ronni

Or, if I felt like hiking, Taffy was ready to hike with me. Maybe her feet were tired from her long hours at the store, but she never complained. She was like that about everything we did, always ready and sweetly eager to share my moods, my pleasures.

Oh, it was good being in love with Taffy. Exhilarating, like a spring breeze, refreshing, wholesome. I loved being with her.

She must have expected me to suggest marriage, but she gave no hint of it. I truly intended to, but I kept putting it off. Marriage tied one down. Why hurry? We were both young, there was plenty of time.

I was very careful not to take Taffy anywhere Rene might be, but once we saw Florence in a restaurant. Taffy pointed her out to me.

"She used to work at the counter next to mine," she said, "but she doesn't know me now, since she's found some rich friends."

I was thankful that Florence didn't seem to know me either!

THOUGH I seldom went near the mine, Rene showed some curiosity about it, and once she asked if we could visit it. Since it was a rather usual thing for people to go through the mine, I promised to take her. Wallace, a bookkeeper, showed us around.

To me that mine had always been just a dirty hole in the ground. A source of income, of course, but a place to be left alone.

But Rene found it all grippingly interesting. "Isn't it romantic, to think of Mother Nature working for millions of years to store up all this fuel just so we can keep ourselves warm?"

Smug words, weren't they? But not nearly so smug as my unconscious acceptance of all of Mother Nature's work—and that of hundreds of laborers—so that I could spend money luxuriously.

"I've never heard of a cave-in or mine tragedy here," Rene went on. "Don't you ever have them?"

"No, Miss Fletcher," Wallace told her. "We're mighty proud to say that not one life has been lost in all the years we've been tunneling away here. We take every precaution, use only the best equipment, and our blasting is set off by electricity. That's nothing new, but it was when we first did it."

And he went on to explain how the charges were laid after the mine was emptied of workers, and then touched off by pressing a button in the control house. He even explained the various buttons there.

Rene's trip to the mine annoyed me. Maybe it was only normal curiosity that had led to it, but she showed so much interest in every detail that I felt somehow she might be checking up on my business.

That thought angered me. What business was it of Rene's what the mine amounted to? And why did she have to be so eternally grasping? Other women—Taffy, at least—weren't. Taffy had never taken any interest in my money, had in fact refused to take any but the most simple presents from me.

"I don't want you to *buy* me things, Tommy," she insisted. "It—it's like putting a price tag on love."

So Taffy wouldn't take my gifts, and though I sensed that she would have liked to marry me, she made no demands.

It wasn't that way with Rene, though. But even though she let me see that she hoped for marriage, she understood that our relation was one of "friendship" and freedom. It had been that way in our youth. I hadn't been, I knew, Rene's first lover, but she managed to make me feel in various and subtle ways that I was the only important one.

Rene came to my house one night after midnight, demanded admittance. I had just come from an evening with Taffy, and I was in one of the chastened moods I always felt when I had held her sweet innocence in my arms.

"Tommy," Rene began, "I don't know what you'll think of me coming here, but I'm desperate. I have to see you—"

"Yes," I said coldly, folding my arms and leaning against the mantel.

She bit her lips. Her brown hair was blown in wisps back from her face, and her eyes were beseeching. "Tommy—I'm throwing my pride to the winds—but, you know how much I've always loved you. I—"

"Well?"

"Tommy—I thought I could be content to just go on and on this way, being what you asked of me, taking only what you wanted to give me, and being happy—but I can't, Tommy, I *can't.* I've come to the place where I can't stand it any longer."

"Pull yourself together, Rene, and stop making a scene." In distaste, I shrank from her, wishing she'd get out of my house.

"Why, Tommy," she cried out, throwing herself at my feet and gripping me by the knees, "you can't be as hard-hearted as you sound. Tommy, haven't you one little bit of feeling for my poor heart?"

"Of course, Rene." I had to say something. "Of course I'm touched—"

"Oh, darling!" With one clutching motion she pulled herself up, threw her arms around my neck. "I knew all the time you loved your Rene. Dearest, let's wake up a justice and be married—now!"

Coldly, I drew back, tried to disentangle her gripping arms. In my panic I could see only one way of dealing with Rene, and that was frankly—brutally, if you will.

"Stop it, Rene," I ordered. "There never was any question of marriage between us—and there isn't now. I don't know what possessed you to come here and stage that emotional stunt you just pulled, but it's netting you nothing. Now get out."

She drew back, and her eyes looked yellow for a moment. Then the anger seemed to fade from her face, she became pleading again.

"But, Tommy—I'd be a good wife to you. We could have so many good times together." She smiled, rather wanly.

"Lock up the dramatics and get out of here, you sniveling little hypocrite," I stormed at her. "I'd *die* before I'd marry you. If you don't go, I'll—I'll—" With sudden anger I rushed toward her, my hands outstretched, my fingers working. In that moment, I wanted to twist them about her white neck.

Fire glinted from her eyes, her face went white as paper, and she dropped her affected manner. "All right, if that's the way you feel about it, I'll get out." She retreated to the door. "I hope I get a chance to send you to hell sometime—and I hope you rot there!" she screamed as she slammed it behind her.

I dropped to a chair, mopped my face with my handkerchief. So that was the sweet little playmate I'd spent so many hours with—all in the name of freedom. The money Rene had always accepted from me had squared things in my eyes. Of course I knew she'd hoped I'd change my mind about matrimony some day, but to come here and try to stampede me into it by her emotional tempest—when my mind and heart were with Taffy! I realized it was because of Taffy that I had become so angry.

IT was near dawn before I slept, and it was evening when I awoke. The evening of what must have been a busy day for Rene.

I went to see Taffy that night, thanking my lucky stars that Rene did not know about her. But one sight of Taffy's strained face told me something had happened.

"Taffy!" I cried. "What is it? Tell me!"

Her mother was still at my house, and we were alone.

"Come in and sit down, Tommy," she said wearily. "We'll have to talk sometime, and it might as well be now. It's just that—there was a girl here—and—"

"Rene Fletcher?"

At her nod, I swore under my breath.

"What did that—what did she say to you?"

"She said," Taffy told me simply, "that she had been your mistress until another girl—Florence Bagley—replaced her. That you had told her you'd marry her."

"But I didn't, Taffy," I interrupted.

Taffy went on as if she hadn't heard. "She said she thought she'd go to Florence and ask her to give you up—but when she found her, she learned you'd already gone on to another girl—me. And so she came here."

So Florence had told Rene about Taffy, had she!

"But, Taffy," I argued, "Rene and I never were engaged. She made that up."

"But you were her lover, and Florence's too—I went and asked her. And you were with Miss Fletcher after we—Oh, don't you see, Tommy, that's what hurts! It isn't what happened before we found our love, it's what happened after it.

"You told me you *loved* me, and I believed it, believed I was something big and real to you—was happy in that belief. And then to find out I was only one of your loves—only a little side affair—"

"Taffy!" I cut in. "That's not so! You're the only girl I've ever truly loved, the only one I ever want—"

"But still you went from my arms to those of another girl—or came from hers to mine," Taffy said in a tired little voice.

"I was a weakling, Taffy—"

She shook her head sadly. "If love couldn't make you strong, Tommy, nothing could. I wish you'd go now—for I—I don't think I can talk any more. And there isn't anything else to be said anyway. I know you've loved me—but it wasn't a big enough love—"

"But, Taffy—"

"Please, Tommy. It has to be this way. You'll make it easier for me if you'll go."

I tried to argue a little, to make Taffy see my side of it, but I succeeded only in strengthening the case Rene had made against me. She hadn't lost any time in building my road to hell, I thought bitterly as Taffy closed the door behind me.

Poor, hurt little Taffy. The pain in her eyes and voice cut into my soul, made me twist and writhe as I realized what I had done to her. If only I could have made her understand—but maybe it's never possible for a good woman to understand how unimportant a bad woman can be to a man. He may enjoy her company hugely, but she doesn't touch his heart.

Rene had never touched my heart, but Taffy had. And now Taffy was hurt because I had touched her heart too. And I had wanted only to bring her happiness.

I was in my room the next thing I knew, it was another day—and I had a head that told me only too well where I had gone after I left Taffy.

Holden had left a newspaper at my bedside, and even though the letters swam dizzily before my eyes, I made out the startling headlines that blackened its front:

WIFE OF PROMINENT BUSINESS MAN SUES HUSBAND'S SECRETARY

MRS. ALLISON NEWPORT BRINGS ALIENATION OF AFFECTIONS SUIT AGAINST RENE FLETCHER

Rene Fletcher? *Rene!* Blinking back the dizziness, I rushed on:

Mrs. Newport told reporters she had called on Miss Fletcher Wednesday and threatened to bring suit if she did not leave her husband's employ at once.

"She said then she would consider it. But the next day she was still there and she told me she could take my husband any time she wanted to—and I could just go snap my fingers," Mrs. Newport said. "I'm snapping them," she added.

Conrad Nagel helps a lady in distress

Conrad Nagel...currently starred in the Grand National picture, "Bank Alarm".

"A relative of mine back East wrote me that his daughter, whose engagement had just been tragically broken, was visiting the coast. Would I help her?...

"I took her to dinner. She was a pretty girl, but her self-confidence had been shattered by her bitter experience. I encouraged her to tell her troubles...

"Her fiance's love had cooled until, in despair, she finally sent back his ring. It occurred to me that her appearance could be improved and I couldn't resist just one bit of advice...

"'Remember', I said, 'a girl's most alluring feature is her mouth. No man is attracted by dry, cracked lips. To keep always lovely, there's a special lipstick with a Beauty-cream base.'"...

THAT ADVICE ABOUT KISSPROOF HAS MADE LIFE WORTH LIVING AGAIN! NOW JOHN'S RING IS BACK ON MY FINGER. THE BEAUTY-CREAM BASE OF KISSPROOF IS A GIRL'S MOST PRECIOUS BEAUTY AID!
Kissproof protects your tender lips from drying and chapping while it gives warm, lasting color.
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Indelible LIPSTICK and ROUGE
5 luscious shades of Kissproof at drug and department stores 50c
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"Miracle Face Powder Test" 597

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Please rush "Miracle Face Powder Test". (Includes miniature Tangee Lipstick.) I enclose 5¢ (stamps or coin) (10¢ in Canada)... Send sampler checked:

Sampler #1 ☐	Sampler #2 ☐	Sampler #3 ☐
Contains Flesh and Rachel	Contains Rachel and Light Rachel	Contains Flesh and Light Rachel

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Brush Away

GRAY HAIR

AND LOOK 10 YEARS YOUNGER

NOW, without any risk, you can tint those streaks or patches of gray or faded hair to lustrous shades of blonde, brown or black. A small brush and BROWNATONE does it. Prove it, by applying the tint to a lock of your own hair.

Used and approved—for over twenty-five years by thousands of women. BROWNATONE is safe. Guaranteed harmless for tinting gray hair. Active coloring agent is purely vegetable. Cannot affect waving of hair. Is economical and lasting—will not wash out. Simply retouch as the new gray appears. BROWNATONE imparts rich, beautiful color with amazing speed. Just brush or comb it in. Shades: "Blonde to Medium Brown" and "Dark Brown to Black" cover every need.

BROWNATONE is only 50c—at all drug and toilet counters—always on a money-back guarantee.

I put the paper down, laughed a little drunkenly. Wednesday. Rene had come to me Wednesday night. So she had been playing us against each other—Newport and me. And when the crisis caught up with her, and she failed to land me, she was taking him. I didn't know the man, but I pitied him.

With Holden's help I got into my grey suit, and against his advice I went out as soon as I had gulped down the black coffee he insisted I take. I knew how this notoriety would hurt Rene, who had always preserved such an air of decorum. If she had arranged to give me hell, she was getting a little of it too. This deserved a celebration—and how I was going to celebrate it!

I know I was still drunk when I left my house, know the events of that day must be brought to you from out the haze that was my memory, but I'm *sure* they were as I'm setting them down here.

After making a round of drinking places, I ran across a miner who was leaning over a bar.

"Have a drink, buddy?" I questioned.

He looked up. "I'd enjoy it," he said, "but I couldn't treat back. I'm broke."

"Thas all right. Waiter, give thish man what he wansh." I was beginning to find my celebration lonely, and I wanted somebody to talk to. So we drank together—I don't know how many—and then we went to other places where we repeated the process. I wasn't in the habit of fraternizing with strange boozers, but right now I wanted company and this fellow filled the bill.

JERRY MIKEL, he said his name was. He had come to Galeville recently and was new at the mine. "Ain't got no folks," he told me when he reached a stage of inebriated confidence. "Grew up in an orphanage—shunted out in middle of depression—" he made a futile gesture with his hands, "—nothing I could do about it. Went on the road—never worked. Got my first job. Down at the minsh—you seen the minsh?" He cocked his head questioningly.

I nodded.

"Swell plash. Big black templesh. Way down in middle of the earsh."

"Templesh? I never saw 'em."

"Down in the middle of the earsh," he repeated. "Lesh go down; I show you."

Drunken idiocy—or the hand of God? I only know I allowed him to lead me from the bar. And I remember two more fragments of the happenings of that day. One was that at some time or other he noticed my grey suit, admired it.

"Nish closhes—gonna get me shum closhes when I get m'pay. Never hash none in m'life."

I don't remember what I said or did then, but I know I must have given him my suit, and taken his overalls.

And the other thing I recall was the sight of Rene. I don't know where I saw her, but I'm *positive* I saw her face, drawn with hate and malice.

I don't know how we got into the mine—there's nothing more in my memory but sensations and delirium.

But in that delirium I saw myself standing in utter darkness, saw sudden blinding sheets of flame lick out of nowhere, felt a deafening jar that pounded against my head and knocked me flat.

I felt myself being choked, felt bones and muscles breaking and tearing as a black weight closed down over me. And over it all hung Rene's face, yellow eyes gloating.

Hell. Rene had sent me to hell, as she had said she would.

I floated in that hell for weeks. And then one day I opened my eyes.

I was in a bed in a clean white room, and there were some bright potted plants on the window sill.

"Good morning," a white-capped nurse said cheerfully. "I thought it was about time you were taking some real interest in life."

I looked at her, wrinkled my brows in an attempt to straighten out my thoughts.

"Aren't you going to say good morning?"

I tried to smile at her. I opened my lips, but no sound came.

"What's the matter? Can't you talk?"

I shook my head.

"But you can hear me—and understand?"

I nodded.

She called the doctor, and after he had examined me he explained that a loss of speech sometimes resulted from too great a shock and that it would probably come back as I regained my strength. And then he told me what had happened.

It seemed that a fire had broken out at one of the small buildings near the mine, and all hands had gone to extinguish it. "It must have been just then that you fellows slipped into the mine," Dr. Britton explained. "Nobody knows how the dynamite charges happened to go off. They had been set, wires placed for ignition just before the fire started—then suddenly they went off.

"But someone had seen Tommy Morsden and another man going toward the mine, and so they sent a searching crew down and found you half buried under coal, and almost done for. But you're coming along fine now."

He smiled at me as he turned to go, and then he added: "Lucky you weren't two feet farther down that passage when the blast went off, or you'd have been blotted out the way Tommy Morsden was."

Tommy Morsden? What was he talking about? *I* was Tommy Morsden.

"Here, take it easy." The doctor turned in alarm at the amazement which must have shown on my face. "I didn't think it would affect you that way."

I struggled to sit up, I twisted my lips in a futile effort to talk. The doctor put quieting hands upon me, laid me back on my pillow. "Now you just lie down and be still, old man. The nurse is going to give you something to drink, and then you'll sleep."

They talked about sleep—when I didn't want to sleep. They told me Tommy Morsden was dead—when I was Tommy Morsden. But I couldn't talk, couldn't tell them what fools they were.

The sedative began to affect me, my tense body relaxed a little, my mind began to soar away from it, in the flights that sometimes come just as one is dropping off to sleep. *I, Tommy Morsden, was dead!* And, being dead, I was freed of the weakness and worthlessness that had been mine.

WHEN I awoke, logical, reasonable thought came to my brain. The doctor had said they didn't know how the charge had been ignited, but I wondered if I didn't have a solution. Rene—I was positive I had seen her somewhere—could she have seen us go into the mine, slipped into the control house and pressed that button?

And then I shrugged my shoulders. Maybe it was all the product of a drunken and overworked imagination. Maybe Rene had nothing to do with it. Better leave Rene to the judgment of God, I decided, and turn my attention to other things.

It was obvious that I had been mistaken for the unfortunate miner, Jerry Mikel, but it must be only a question of time until someone would recognize me.

I remembered vaguely that we had changed clothes, which was no doubt responsible for the identification, but surely they hadn't depended upon that alone.

The nurse was out of the room and I managed, by gritting my teeth against the pain, to raise myself upon one elbow and stare into the mirror. And then I understood. My long straight nose had been crushed by the landslide of coal, had been broken and widened a little. Curiously, I fingered it, smiled as I realized it wasn't such a bad

looking nose, but it certainly wasn't the handsome appendage Tommy Morsden had carried into the mine.

There were scars on my face too, scars that would some day lose some of their redness, but which would forever change my appearance. Only the eyes that looked into mine were the eyes of Tommy Morsden. Jerry Mikel's eyes, I remembered, had been about the same deep brown as my own, and his build had been very similar. No wonder we had been mistaken for each other.

Easing myself back to my pillow, I thought the situation over, thanked God that He had taken my voice so that I had not betrayed myself in my first moment of surprise.

FROM then on, I gained strength daily. Rough, sympathetic men from the mine dropped in to see me, talked awkwardly of their work, and went away, wishing me luck. Since it was explained to them that my speech was gone, their conversation was entirely one-sided, and they never knew how carefully I listened to it, fastened on to every bit of information for future use.

The company adjuster came too, to see me about a damage settlement, and from him I learned that the company was taking care of all my hospital expenses, that my job would be ready for me as soon as I could work again, and that they were willing to co-operate with me in any way they could.

So I understood they feared a damage suit, were angling for a quiet settlement. And then I realized what I was doing by clinging to the identity of Jerry Mikel—I was taking over his poverty. If I became Jerry, I had to give up all the income that belonged to Tommy Morsden, and live upon the earnings of my two hands—and was I capable of supporting myself?

As I struggled with the question, this truth dawned in my mind. As Tommy Morsden I had made no good use of my wealth. I was a total failure as a rich man—could I be less as a poor one?

Wisely, I signed no papers, refused to do any business until I was totally "well" again, and when I knew my vocal cords were recovered I kept that fact to myself until I had thought out every avenue I meant to follow.

By that time, the wheels of the law were already grinding upon the estate of Thomas Morsden III, his body had been resting for months in Grandview Cemetery—and Uncle Ernest had erected an enormous monument to his memory.

When I was able to be about, I went to see Taffy. She was in the garden, bending over some flowers when I came up.

"Good evening," I spoke hesitantly.

"Good evening," she said easily as she looked up, and then she started back. I was appalled at the change in her. She had always been so freshly vital, but now she was thin, far too thin, her face was lengthened and shadowed by an expression of sadness, and her blue eyes were larger and deeper than ever. "I—I beg your pardon for staring," she said then, "but you remind me of someone I used to know. You—"

"Someone you loved very much?" I dared to ask.

"Someone I loved with all my heart."

"And if he should come back to you?"

"That would be impossible. You see—he's dead now."

"If he could come back from the dead?" I persisted.

She wrinkled her forehead, stared at me through the gathering dusk.

"Taffy?" All my love for her, and all my longing crept into that one word.

For one startled second Taffy stood poised there, apparently ready for flight. I knew she thought I was a ghost, I knew she was frightened, and I was afraid to speak again, afraid to move for fear of frightening her more. Then the glorious courage that was

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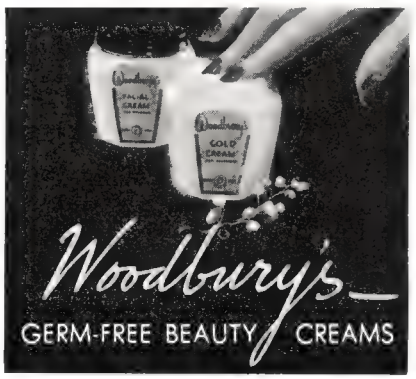

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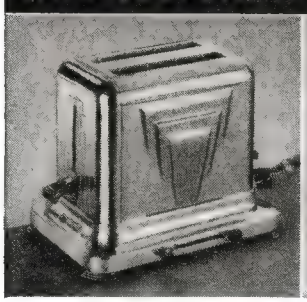

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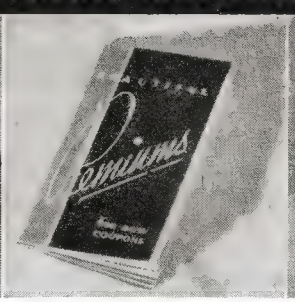

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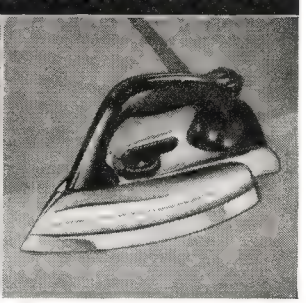

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so much a part of Taffy asserted itself, and she moved to me, touched my hands wonderingly, and then, assured that I was a living man, she crept into my waiting arms.

Holding her trembling little form against me, breathing the fragrance of her hair, sensing the sweetness of her love, it was almost more than I could do to keep from giving way to a sheer demonstration of the passions within me, but during those thoughtful hospital days I had given God a solemn promise that if He would help me gain a second chance at Taffy's love I would hold it sacred this time.

So we sat down on the green grass of Taffy's garden, in almost the same spot where we had first tasted our love, and I explained to her what had happened.

"That night—after I sent you away—I was sorry afterwards, and I prayed God to give me a second chance," Taffy told me softly. "And then, after the accident, I felt I had sent you to it—and I've been praying for your soul—"

I kissed her tenderly. "Something *has* happened to my soul, darling. I know I'm not the person I used to be. But you understand, don't you, dearest, that all that *had* to happen? Tommy Morsden *had* to die, because he wasn't the person who could ever be worthy of your love. No matter how many noble resolutions he made, no matter how much he wanted to change himself, he would always have been too weak to do it."

She took my hand. "I do understand, dear. Tommy—with all his old bad habits—is buried out in Grandview Cemetery. And Jerry is ready to start building up the splendid life of which he is capable—the life he can build out of his own determination—"

"And the faith of the woman he loves," I finished.

Before we were married, we told Mrs. Willis the truth, but to this day I'm sure no one else has ever suspected it. The crushed and mangled man in the grey suit had been so positively identified as Tommy Morsden, the fact that he was dead was so definitely settled in the minds of my townspeople, that I imagine I would have certain difficulties in making them believe it was a mistake were I to try it at this late day.

And I don't want to try it. The fortune that should rightly have belonged to my uncle is in his hands now and he is spending it wisely for the good of the town. And together Taffy and I have carved a very satisfactory niche in life for ourselves.

When I went "back" to work, the other miners chaffed me considerably about growing soft in the hospital. How little they knew that it was the first labor of my whole life! But I let them think I was still weak, gritted my teeth when I thought my back was going to break, when my feet ached and burned in the heavy shoes I had to wear, when my hands blistered and became raw at the unaccustomed work with the pick.

AND gradually I learned to do the work, learned the swell of pride I got from *earning* enough money to support myself and my wife from my own physical labor. I let the company pay my hospital bill, but I accepted no further settlement from them. God had given me the second chance at life—and love—Taffy believed in me, and best of all, she encouraged me to believe in *myself*.

"You've studied the science of mining," she pointed out, "you know about the business end of it—"

"I've a general knowledge of all that goes on in the offices and control rooms," I admitted, "but none of that is as vivid as the actual working knowledge I'm getting now. Why, just see how it's impressing me," and I held out my palms for her inspection.

She bent swiftly and kissed the callouses there. "You're making important contacts with the men too," she said.

I didn't understand what she was getting

at then, but months later I had cause to remember it. I was interested in my work, determined to make a success of it. But that wasn't quite enough. I'm sure if it hadn't been for Taffy's love and faith the work itself would never have held me.

It didn't have enough to offer, after the novelty of learning it and hardening my body to it had passed. Hard work all day long; eat, sleep, get up and go to work again. Endless days, all alike.

"Is this *all* a miner's life amounts to?" I questioned Taffy one day. "Those other fellows seem to accept it casually enough, but sometimes it gets me a little. We work to eat, and then we eat so we can work some more. Sort of a vicious circle."

She put her hand on my arm. "They accept it because they don't realize there is any other life, but you know there are other things, and you're missing them."

"I'm not," I denied. "I'm not sorry I became Jerry Mikel, not for one minute have I ever regretted it. Oh, Taffy, you'll never know what it means to me to have your love, your faith." I held her close to me.

"I know you aren't sorry, Jerry, dear," she smiled. "I know you're happy. I can tell it every time you look at me, every time you kiss me, take me in your arms. I know you're happy in being freed from your other self, but we have to remember that you are cultured and educated. You've a trained mind, Jerry, and now that you've got it in a disciplined body, you—why, Jerry, don't you realize you're capable of rising to any heights?"

From the sheer exuberance of my love I hugged Taffy, waltzed her around the room.

But even as I smiled indulgently over such faith, I understood the dissatisfaction I had found in my work at the mine. The discovery that I could do physical work had been a revelation to me, but I didn't want to retire myself mentally.

I BEGAN to take a new interest in my job, to study it from various angles, work out systems that increased the efficiency.

The other miners laughed good naturedly at what they termed "Jerry's notions," but they didn't scoff.

"You got some good sense in that head of yours, kid," Harney, the crew foreman, told me. "Keep using it."

The history of mines is pretty fascinating. I remember studying it at college, and I thought the other men might be interested, so I wrote to Washington for some pamphlets on the subject and passed them out to my friends. The geological structure of the earth, the long process by which Mother Nature produces coal and kindred products.

A gang of us were discussing those things one noon when Wallace called me.

"Mr. Morsden wants to see you."

I approached that office with some trepidation. True, I had never been on intimate terms with Uncle Ernest, but there was a chance he might recognize me. I needn't have worried though, for I guess the scarred, dirty, and husky miner who faced him was pretty different from the dapper young man he had seen at my father's funeral.

"How do you do, Mikel," he greeted. "Wallace tells me you've been distributing mining literature to the men."

"Yes—yes, sir," I admitted. "I thought they'd be more interested if they knew about the history of coal and coal mining."

"And your foreman tells me you're a very efficient miner."

"I hope so, Mr. Morsden," I said.

"I'm moving Harney to another shift," he said briefly. "You'll take charge of his crew."

A crew foreman! Promotion! The chance to do more than mere physical labor. Just wait until Taffy heard the news!

"I knew you could do it," she bubbled. "I knew it, Jerry. One step up—and some day you're going to be general foreman."

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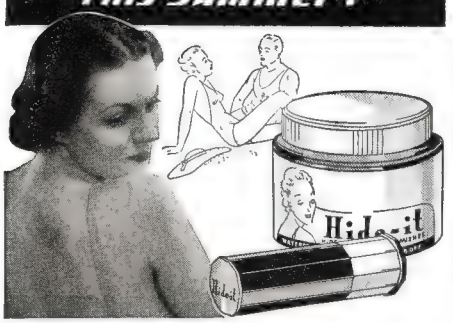

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I smiled. "That time is a long way off."

But maybe it isn't so far away at that. I had won the friendship and the confidence of my men before I was put in charge of them, and they worked like troupers under my direction.

There have been several promotions since then, but I've never lost that precious contact with those miners.

Need I add that out of all the struggles and turmoils and labors a beautiful and glowing happiness came to Taffy and me—and to Mother Willis? We're still living modestly in her little cottage, associating with the other mining families, contented, proud to be a part of the great American working class, and looking forward to the time when our little Jerry will climb the hill to the Thomas Morsden Memorial School, erected by Uncle Ernest.

I can't start telling you about the heart-tightening dearness of little Jerry for, like other proud parents, I never would stop. But no matter if Taffy and I do think there isn't another child in all the world quite like him, we're agreed that he's going to learn self-reliance and self-discipline from the very start.

It's the most important inheritance we can give him. And if it lets him find the gloriously satisfying love and the perfect happiness we know, he'll never ask for more.

The March of Life

(*Continued from page 33*)

expected me to. But I was pretty sick of freights. I guess I just wasn't cut out for a roving life, and having my own little corner with my own bunk sure made me feel like a man. Besides, I got so I knew the trade almost as well as Mike.

"I was almost twenty that October when a lady from a big house on Central Park ordered bookcases for her living room," Patrick said reminiscently. "And that's how I met Margaret.

"She was working for that lady. She opened the door for me when I came in, and I remember just standing there, thinking I'd never seen a girl so pretty. I'll never forget how she looked that day, not if I live to be a hundred. She was dainty enough to eat, in her cute black uniform with white at the neck and wrists, and a silly bit of white apron and a cap over her yellow curls.

"It was love at first sight. I just said, 'Look, I'm going to see you again. When?'

"She wasn't coy about it. She didn't try to keep me dangling. 'Thursday night,' she said simply. 'It's my night off.'"

"Well, I took her out that Thursday," Patrick told them. "And then on Sunday, and pretty soon we were going steady. It was wonderful, having her for my girl. Wonderful to sit in the dark movies with her, holding hands. Or in the park in good weather.

"One night in the park I kissed her, and suddenly she was crying. I was terribly scared, but she just said, 'Don't mind me, Pat. Don't mind me. It's because I'm so happy. You see, I've never had a boy friend to love me before.'

"Midge had been brought up in an orphanage too, you see. I knew how she felt, because that past month had been magic for me, too. So I said, 'You won't go on having a boy friend much longer if you'd rather have a husband. If you'll have me.'

"We got married the very next month. We rented a couple of rooms in the same house where the store was, upstairs. I think I was the happiest man in the world, year before last! Midge took to housekeeping like a kitten to playing ball, and Mike helped me build all the furniture in the flat.

"Then Midge started going around looking

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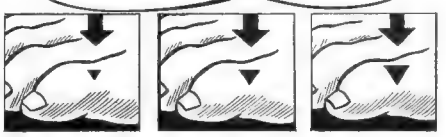

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kind of peaked, and first thing I knew, I was getting the truth out of her. Midge was going to have a baby.

"The doctor at the clinic said she was just built for having babies, but as the months went by I wasn't so sure. Midge was pale and listless and sick a good deal of the time.

"I guess it was being so scared that made her act peculiar. She used to sit all evening in the big low chair she liked, pretending to sew, but actually looking and looking at me. 'It's so I'll never forget the least thing about you, Pat, not even in another world. It's so I'll always have you with me, even if I die.'

"It used to drive me crazy, to hear her talk like that. 'Midge,' I'd tell her over and over, kissing her, 'don't you even dare think about such a thing!'

"And certainly if telling her could have helped, she'd be with me today. But Midge seemed to know better than the doctor or me or anyone. She'd just shake her yellow hair and smile sadly. 'I feel so queer, Pat.'

"She said, too, 'Pat, you've got to promise me something. If anything goes wrong, you'll keep the baby always. You won't send it to a home, will you? or give it a stepmother?'

"I promised her. I promised just to keep her from fretting herself sick. Of course my Midge was going to live! For both of us, life was only beginning.

"But when my wife's time came, something seemed to go wrong. I shall never, never forget her white, spent face when at last they wheeled her to the delivery room. The way she tried to smile at me. 'I'm all right, Pat. Only—only I wish you were with me—'

"The baby arrived after hours and hours of torture, and Midge—well, she just didn't seem to have strength enough to get well.

"I was with her all the time. She kept talking about baby Midge. 'Remember, Pat, you'll keep her with you. You won't give her a stepmother!'

"Almost with her last breath she told me that. I swore I'd do everything like she wanted. I was nearly crazy with grief. It seemed that promising things to Midge, telling her what I'd do for the baby, would be like keeping the shadow of her with me."

PATRICK'S face was tortured with the memory. He looked at the baby in his lap, and with awkward tenderness he touched her hand. Pat was used to her helplessness, of course, but Clelia couldn't stand it. "Doctor!" she cried. "You're going to make her better! You're sure?"

"When I brought baby Midge home," Pat continued, "Mike said I was crazy. He said taking care of a child was a woman's business, and I ought to let some woman do it. Or put her in a home till she was a bit older. Pretty soon, when he kept after me all the time, we quarreled. I quit working for him. I picked up my own tools and moved to another neighborhood.

"After a while I moved again, to the place where I am now. I was so scared Mike would find me and set some nosey social agency on my trail. I kept the baby with me, looking after her . . . I guess I was a fool. I should have listened to Mike instead."

He was silent then, puffing viciously on his pipe that had gone out. Thinking of the dead golden girl who for a little while had made his life beautiful. Thinking how badly he had kept his promise to her.

The doctor, as I have said, was a wise and experienced woman. She had long since passed the stage where any of the stories she heard astonished or shocked her, and she was past getting indignant at blunders and ignorance.

She said gently, "It's too late now to talk of what should have been done. The main thing is, can we make your baby well? I think we can, Patrick O'Connor. But it may take many weeks. Will you trust her to us?"

Then for the first time Patrick smiled, a gay, Irish smile that should have been on his

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young face all along. "Of course I will."

Clelia Petrini spoke to the baby. "You'll get well now. Well and strong. Pretty soon you'll be running around with the others."

And that was how Baby Midge O'Connor was admitted to Seaside Hospital.

There is no point in describing here the treatment which was prescribed for her, except that the main things about it were very simple; proper diet and sunlight.

Patience was the hardest lesson we had to teach Midge's father. He used to come over and hover over her on visiting days, and the very first week he wanted to see an improvement. Could she move her head yet? Did she kick? Could she sit up?

Sometimes Clelia Petrini came with him, and when she did, she used to explain to him how it was with babies. "Even the healthy little ones shouldn't sit up till they're good and strong. They shouldn't walk too soon, either. It makes them bandy-legged."

Somehow Clelia's explanations always seemed to satisfy him more than any doctor's. "You know so much about babies," he'd say. "If only I'd had someone like you to go to when—when big Midge—died!"

She always blushed when he said things like that. After a while she began to wear her cheap, pretty Sunday clothes for her trips to Seaside, a bright pink near-silk dress and hat to match. And her soft mouth was faintly touched with lipstick, making her dark eyes sparkle. And some of the nurses wondered if Patrick noticed.

But no one ever knew whether he did or not, because he was so terribly wrapped up in his daughter. When the baby really did begin, slowly, to improve, all he said was, "If only her mother could see her now!"

One day one of the nurses heard Clelia tell him, "You know, Patrick, you're wrong about step-parents. They aren't all bad. Take Papa, for instance. He isn't my real father. But he's good to us."

Patrick O'Connor glared. "Do you mean I should marry again?"

She blushed and stammered something, but he wouldn't listen. "I thought you were a good friend to me," he said bitterly.

After that, they did not come together any more. Sometimes, on weekdays, Celia stole over alone to visit his baby. She did not wear her pink dress then nor the lipstick. And, "Don't you let Mr. O'Connor know I was here," she begged the nurses. "I know his baby is none of my business, I know he'd be mad—but I can't help it. I can't help loving Midge," she ended lamely.

Then, one day in mid-August, Clelia brought her own brood to the Floating Hospital once more. They had all had summer colds and once more the social agency in her neighborhood had given them tickets. The four small Petrinis were pale, the way children get toward the end of a hot city summer. And Tony, the eight-year-old, had fever sores.

"He can't throw off his cold at all," Clelia explained, when she had finally coaxed the small reluctant boy into the clinic. "I guess it's his tonsils."

Here was another case for Seaside Hospital to handle. We perform a lot of tonsillectomies for the Tonies of New York, relieving the crowded free hospital lists whenever we can. A date was made for Tony to enter Seaside before the end of the month.

AND so, inevitably, Patrick and Clelia met again on visitors' day. Facing each other, they were terribly embarrassed.

Give Patrick credit for this: He looked at Clelia squarely, and he said, "I'm glad that you're here. I've missed you." Then he blushed to the very roots of his red hair, as on that first day on the dock at Market Street, "Say, my little Midge is really getting well."

Clelia smiled up at him. "I'm glad."

He smiled back. "And say, I've been want-

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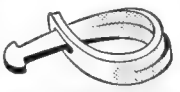

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City_____ State_____ Age____

ing to ask you. When I get her home, will you come to see her?"

A strange look came into the girl's dark eyes, then quickly vanished. "I don't know, Patrick," she said dully. "I don't know as I'll have time. Maybe I'll be getting married."

"But you're only a kid! Have you been keeping company with someone?"

"The butcher on Sixth Avenue has a son. My parents want me to marry him."

Patrick shrugged his shoulders angrily and his voice was oddly harsh. "I guess Midge and I will get along all right by ourselves."

He was determined, this young Patrick O'Connor, to remain blind to what anyone watching him and Clelia could see at a glance; that a dark-haired, dark-eyed girl was ready to step into the place in his heart which a girl with yellow hair had left achingly void; that a promise made in passionate grief fourteen months ago was an empty promise now—now that life and youth had caught up with him.

He was determined to remain blind and he stuck to his guns. And there was nothing at all the girl could do. Already she felt she had been forward, said too much.

So it looked as if Patrick and his baby daughter would have to go on alone, with no woman to love them. And Clelia would have to be the dutiful daughter and accept a loveless marriage after the custom of her people.

August was over now. Little Tony Petrini had been sent home, his tonsils out safely and a sunburn making his dark little face golden brown. Other little patients were leaving and no new ones coming in, for Seaside Hospital operates only in summer. Baby Midge O'Connor was among those we wanted to keep until the very last.

She was quite well now. She had grown a lot and her cheeks were no longer waxen, but a healthy pink. She could sit up. Of course, it would take some time before she caught up with other children her own age, before she started walking.

STILL, we were pleased with her amazing recovery, and Patrick couldn't wait to take her home. And then, suddenly, the blow fell. Clelia Petrini came rushing to Seaside with the frantic news.

"They're going to take Midge away from her father!" she cried in panic, her beautiful dark eyes swimming with unshed tears. "Somehow a children's shelter heard of her, and they say they'll *make* Patrick put her in a home! I found out, because an investigator came to see us, asking questions. . . ."

On the face, it was not surprising that if an agency had heard of the O'Connor case, it should be anxious to spare the baby a precarious existence. Only someone who knew the whole case history, who understood Patrick, and how eager he was now to do everything for the baby we had slowly taught him he must do, would have thought of the young father as a safe guardian for the infant.

But Clelia was not thinking reasonably. She kept saying, her voice fierce and passionate, "They're going to kill him if they take her! Oh, what can I do to stop them?" And being able to do nothing, she just hugged baby Midge, hugged her as if her own heart were breaking.

Patrick himself arrived on the very next ferry. His first impulse was to accuse us of having betrayed him to the agency. "I thought you were my friends," he said over and over. "And this is what you do. . . ."

Suddenly he turned on Clelia. "I know, you did it! I asked you to keep an eye on my baby, but you wanted to get married and you couldn't be bothered. And you figured, if she were in a home somewhere, you could forget all about her—"

It was such a bitter accusation, so unfair you knew Patrick himself could hardly believe it. Clelia, hearing him, turned white.

(*Continued on page 100*)

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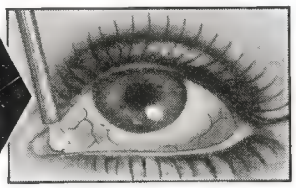

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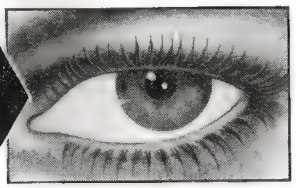

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Put one on—the pain is gone!

Love-Stained

(*Continued from page 39*)

and devoted to Isabel in spite of her utter selfishness. She treated them like the dirt under her feet—and they adored her.

Oh what a tangled web! We all tried, however, to keep up a smooth unruffled surface. Dad and Janet were the only two, I guess, who were really completely innocent of what was going on. Each of us with his own particular secret. Michel was mine. And how it burned its humiliation into my soul! Particularly now that I knew I had misjudged Madison. I shuddered every time I thought that he might ever learn. How terribly it would hurt him.

Isabel was jealous of me, in spite of every precaution. She was jealous before she left New York. That was Michel's doing. He had told the children I was young and pretty and lively. And Isabel was the sort of woman who wants to be the only attractive female. That was her reason for treating me like a servant. I saw Madison's cheeks turn white more than once when she was particularly sharp or unfair. But for the sake of all concerned he held his tongue.

Madison, perhaps, had the hardest time of us all. He couldn't work in his studio at night because the children slept there. By day it was their living room. And I saw a harassed look in his eyes. Money was worrying him.

Cold weather descended on us. Thanksgiving came and went. Snow fell and the children were overjoyed. It was the first lasting snow they had ever seen.

I watched the weeks, of course, waiting for the day when Father's arm would come out of the splint—and we could go. Two weeks before Christmas it was removed.

It was stiff! And a little crooked. It hadn't been set exactly right. Father didn't say anything but I knew he was sick with the fear that he would never be able to play the violin again. Laboriously I heard him learning to bow—upstairs alone.

There was no use thinking of going back to his job yet. And as if that weren't a sufficient blow to me—I made the stupefying discovery that I was pregnant. I was horrified. That was too terrible! What a ghastly, trapped feeling! And how it altered my attitude toward an event that until then had seemed a tragic mistake of the past—a humiliating mistake that gave me pain to recall, but one that I could eventually forget. But now, suddenly, I discovered that this tragic mistake wasn't a thing of the past. It was in the present and couldn't be run away from. It wasn't an error that could be kept secret. People were going to know about it!

Mother and Father would find out! Madison! I went cold with shame at the thought. And Aunt Sophie! Isabel! Father was going to be the most hurt—unless it was Madison. For Father was so trusting and innocent! So sure of *my* innocence!

I WENT to Mother, confused and shaking like a little child. My throat was tight, my eyes smarting with tears all ready to flow. What was she going to say? Oh, how I hated to tell her!

"Mom!" It came with a sob. "Mom, don't be cross! Don't scold!" I threw myself into her arms and cried against her neck.

"What is it child? What is it?" Mother asked, alarmed.

"I've done something terrible! Oh, Mom! It's awful!"

"It can't be anything *very* terrible," Mother said. "Have you broken something—or lost some of Madison's music?"

I shook my head, buried my tear-wet face against her breast.

"Mother, I'm going—to have a baby!"

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"Dolly! No! It can't be!" The shocked, white look of pain in her face was even worse than I had pictured it. "Oh, honey!" She caught me close again. Her arms clutched tight and I clung to her desperately. "It's Madison?"

"No, Mom. It isn't Madison. It's a man I don't even—care for."

"But who? Why, Dolly— You haven't been off the place—scarcely."

"Michel!" I said with a gasping sob. "When he was here. I don't know why! I didn't mean to! I can't ever explain, Mom!" I drew back to look at her. "Don't hate me! Please!"

"I don't hate you—my poor lambkin!" Mother's eyes filled and she, too, began to sob. "Mother could never hate you. I just —didn't—expect anything—like—this."

"Does Daddy have to know? Can we go away from here—before anyone finds out? Madison—and Aunt Sophie—and Isabel."

"Father must know, dear," Mother said, stopping her crying. "The rest of them don't have to. You don't have to be afraid of Daddy."

"I'm not afraid, Mom. I'm ashamed."

Mother patted my back.

"Honey, I'm glad you came to me. And don't worry. Everything is going to be all right. I don't know how yet, but it will."

"What can we do, Mom? Father can't play yet. We can't go to Aunt Sophie's."

"No-o-o. But we'll find a way."

"Mom?" I shuddered at the thought that had just come to me—but, if I was brave enough—

"Well?" Mother looked at me sharply. "Don't look so frightened, honey. What is it?"

"Aren't there—places—" I broke off and bit my lip, "places for girls—who get in trouble?"

Mother shook her head.

"We don't have to do that," she said. "We'll ask Father. Don't be afraid. Just let me do the talking."

"I don't want to be a coward. I'll do it if—"

"Dolly—*dear!*" Mother's voice broke. "You don't have to punish yourself. Don't feel that way. It's Michel I'd like to thrash!"

"It wasn't his fault—any more than it was mine," I said. "I don't know *why* I did it."

"Michel Hoffman!" Mother cried bitterly. "And to think how we've worshiped him. Your father—he thinks he's a demigod."

"Do we have to tell Father it was Michel? I wish *nobody* had to know—ever. Not even Michel."

"I don't know—" Mother hesitated. "Father will want to know—and if we don't tell him—he's going to wonder."

"I don't want him to think it was—Madison. Do whatever you think best, Mom, but—" I broke off to listen. I heard footsteps, in the kitchen. "I think that's Daddy now. Oh, *Mom!*"

FATHER came in a second later. He was carrying an armful of wood for the fireplace. He was trying to use his broken arm as much as he could, especially in anything that would make him bend it.

"Well, Frank," Mother said, "you certainly have apples in your cheeks. They're as red as pippins." She kissed him affectionately, then looked suddenly concerned, and put her hand to his forehead. "You're hot as fire. Feel all right?"

"A bit of a headache—and my throat is dry," Father admitted. "Guess I'm coming down with a cold."

Father went to bed that night feeling miserable and next morning was acutely sick —with influenza.

"I won't tell him about you," Mother said to me, "not until he's well. Just as soon as your father is well again, we must go."

Father was sick three weeks, passing Christmas in bed. Then, just as he was starting to sit up in bed and we were planning to have him downstairs in a day or two, Mother came down with it.

"I *would* have to," she said. "But don't worry, Dolly. I'll throw it off quickly—and then we'll be able to go."

Influenza, however, is something it isn't wise to try to hurry through. Mother tried to get up too soon, and had a relapse that proved very serious. It was five weeks before she was downstairs, very wan and thin and easily tired.

"Dolly's the only healthy member of the family," Father said. "Look how plump *she's* getting. Farm life is good for her."

Mother and I exchanged glances. We hadn't told Father yet. Isabel came down with a very bad attack of the flu a day or two later.

A good deal of work had fallen on me in those past weeks. I had got very tired. And to climax it—I, too, got the flu. It was March before I recovered and could get up. And by that time there was no concealing my condition. We had to tell Father. He took it very hard. His face flushed and he demanded to know who the man was.

"I'll shoot the scoundrel!" he cried. "Is it someone up here?"

"No, Frank," Mother soothed. "And shooting wouldn't help anyhow. We don't want a scandal. We had hoped to get away from here before anyone knew. It's Sophie I mind more than anyone else."

It was Madison *I* minded. I'll never forget the humiliation of that first moment when Father helped me down the stairs to the kitchen—and Madison was there! I saw his smile of pleasure at seeing me up. Then the startled look—and the way the blood left his cheeks. Not a word to show he had seen, of course. And he never did say anything. But I saw the pain in his

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eyes—the reproach, felt him draw into himself. And as the days passed I suffered double the humiliation I had thought it was possible to suffer.

But the worst was still to come. Isabel had been sicker than I and got up a few days after me. And she wanted *me* to wait on her, help her dress and prepare the armchair. I knew her sharp eyes would see at once, and I went with the firm determination not to mind whatever she said.

AS I entered her bedroom, her big, innocent baby eyes opened wide: surprise, suspicion, anger, malice. The different expressions succeeded one another in her face. For a few seconds she lay looking at me without a word, then startlingly broke into a sneering laugh. Her mind jumped at once to the conclusion that I was carrying Madison's child.

"Right under my eyes!" she said shrilly. "You'd think he would have the decency to keep his mistress under another roof, at least."

I flushed hotly. Indignation and humiliation seethed together. Then—for the children's sakes—I knew I must convince her that Madison was not responsible.

"You are making a mistake," I said, forcing myself to be humble.

"Oh, no, I'm not!" she shrilled.

"Mrs. Hoffman, you *must* believe me. Madison had nothing to do with this."

"Of *course* you'd deny it!" she cried. "But don't think you can lie to me. I knew before I came up here that you and Madison were in love. That's what he came to New York for. He admitted he was going to divorce *me* if I didn't divorce him. But I changed his mind for him. So don't think you can pull the wool over *my* eyes."

"If I tell you who—who is responsible," I said faintly, "will you believe me?"

"Why should I? You'll lie, of course."

"No I won't! I give you my word." I was so earnest that I saw her expression change.

"Who was it?" she demanded—her big blue eyes cold and hard as ice. "And what proof have you?"

"Mother knows who it was," I said—shaking and sick with the idea of telling. "After I've told you—you can call her in and ask her."

"All right. Who was it?" The pretty, pouting mouth was bitter and mean. I should have taken warning, but I didn't. I was too bent on convincing her that Madison was innocent.

"Please, *please* don't tell anyone, will you?"

"No, I won't tell anyone. Not if you tell me the truth. Who was it?" She got up on one elbow and looked me grimly in the eyes.

"It was—Michel." The name scarcely crossed my lips. "When Madison went down to see you."

"So it was *Mike!*" Cold rage in those words. Then she snorted scornfully. "It *would* be! Well—" she gave me a sneering smile, "I bet Madison will get a big kick out of *that* when I tell him."

"But—but you promised you *wouldn't!*" I cried.

"*That* for my promise!" She snapped her fingers. "You think that's going to stop me? You little fool! What do *you* care so much for, anyway?"

"It would hurt him—" I began.

"Oh-h-h!" she sneered. "It would hurt *him*, would it? Hurt him to know his brother had been trespassing!" Then she gave me a sharp look. "What does Mike say about it?"

"He doesn't know. I don't want him or anyone else to know. You won't tell, will you?"

"Maybe not." She gave me a shrewd look. "That will depend on other things. You've got to leave here! You can't stay."

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"Yes," I nodded eagerly. "We were going to before, but Father got sick. And one after the other—."

"Your mother and father will have to stay here," Isabel said. "I'm used to her, and so are the children. Just you alone. Where will you go?"

"I don't know yet. We haven't any money."

"I'll give you some money. You're not to tell anybody—even your people. You're just to slip away and not come back."

"But I couldn't do that!" I cried. "I couldn't treat Mother and Father like that."

"Would you rather do that or get thrown out? You and your mother and father—the whole bunch of you!"

"Oh, I'd rather all of us go than—leave like—that!"

"Would you? O.K. And you'll get plenty of publicity. There isn't a paper in the United States that wouldn't jump at a chance to publish the story of Michel Hoffman's illegitimate brat. Your mother and father are going to enjoy *that*."

I looked at her in horror. Her blond, doll-like face was hard and vindictive. She really would do what she threatened. What a scandal it would make! How cruelly it would hurt Mother and Father! And Madison!

"I don't believe I have any choice. Yes, I'll go."

"Now listen! Don't try to put anything over on me. You're to pull out of here quietly—at night. And once you're gone, you're gone for good. No coming back. No writing letters. I'll give you enough money to take you to California. But if you ever show up again, I'll plaster you all over the newspapers."

"I want to think about it," I cried, my head whirling. "I don't know whether I'm doing right."

"Changing your mind?" she demanded fiercely.

"I don't know. I'm all confused. I don't see how I *can* go away without even a *word*. They're going to worry so."

"Now listen. You can leave a note—saying you're gone. But you can't tell them beforehand—and you can't say *where* you're going."

"Let me think it over," I begged. "I'll tell you tonight."

"Don't go whining around Madison!" she warned. "I know you're in love with him." Then her manner changed swiftly. "All right, Dolly, go ahead," she said almost kindly. "Think it over. You'll see it's the only way. Bring me something to eat now."

THE rest of that day was the longest, most terrible I ever spent. I had to keep my feelings hidden so that Mother and Father wouldn't suspect.

Father looked so worn and old. Mother so patient. And I would ask myself which was worse: To leave them—or to stay and see them disgraced? And Madison! I must also think of the disgrace to myself and the baby. It would be a scandal we could never live down. It would injure so many people.

"What makes you look so funny today?" Janet asked me. "As if you'd been crying."

"Do I?" I asked.

"Danny noticed it too." Then abruptly. "Did you know my Uncle Michel is coming to see us soon? He likes you, doesn't he? Do you like him?"

In her innocent way she almost took my breath away, striking me a blow that decided me definitely. I just couldn't face Michel Hoffman.

"*Maman* likes him, too," Janet prattled on. "So do Danny and I. He always brings us things."

"Does he, dear?" I hardly knew what I was saying. The thought was drumming in my brain, "I must get away before he comes! I must go now—before he comes!"

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When I took Isabel's supper in to her that night, my mind was made up. She was alone—the rest were in the dining room.

"I've decided to go," I said hurriedly. "I want to go right away."

"Bring me that bag over on the dresser," Isabel said. "I'll give you the money now." She opened the bag and took out a pocketbook. "I had this saved for something else but— There's two hundred dollars there. Now you're *sure* you're going?"

"Yes. Oh yes!"

"How soon?" She was perfectly cold and matter of fact.

"I think I'd better go—tonight." My voice broke. "Before I lose my courage. Be good to Mother and Father, won't you? And if you want me to go to California—"

"I don't care where you go—so long as it's plenty far. Stick that money in your shoe, and don't lose it. That's all I have."

With my heart hammering heavily, feeling terribly guilty and oppressed with the magnitude of my step, I went back to the others and took my place at table.

In the middle of the meal, the telephone rang and I answered it. It was Aunt Sophie. I had managed to avoid seeing her or Uncle Ted, and the neighbors, too, for that matter—so that no one outside of our own household knew I was to have a baby yet. So I was dismayed when she said that she and Uncle Ted were planning to call that evening.

"We want to talk to Madison about that barnful of tobacco he has there. It's a crying shame for it to be hanging there yet. I don't know how a body can be so shiftless, I declare I don't." I put my hand over the mouthpiece and turned to Madison.

"Aunt Sophie and Uncle Ted want to come over tonight and see you about the tobacco—in the barn."

"All right," Madison agreed. "I'll be glad to see them."

I was anything but glad. I knew they would comment on it if I was not there. And if I were, they would comment still more—behind my back.

"What can I do, Mom?" I asked, as we were doing the dishes. "I don't want Aunt Sophie to see me. Suppose I go to bed and you make the excuse that I'm not feeling so well."

"All right, honey," Mother said. "But I don't know how we're going to keep her from finding out soon. Father isn't well enough yet to leave here. He hasn't seemed to get his pep back at all. I'm worried."

Oh, what a temptation it was to tell everything, but I had given Isabel my word.

WHEN I got upstairs to my room, I packed a small bundle of things.

As soon as I heard Aunt Sophie and Uncle Ted drive up, I put out my light and got into bed all dressed.

The high-pitched voice of Aunt Sophie made its way up through the walls and ceiling to my room. Her thrifty New England soul had been worrying about Madison's tobacco. She was here to help him sell it.

At half-past nine, Aunt Sophie and Uncle Ted drove away. I heard Mother and Father come upstairs, listened to them undress, raise the window and go to bed. They would both be asleep quickly, I knew. As soon as all was quiet from Madison's quarters, I would be able to slip downstairs and leave by the kitchen.

Poor Mom and Dad! What were they going to think when they found I had run away without a word?

I had to stifle my sobs in my pillow. It was wet and soggy with tears by the time I felt it was safe to leave my room.

At Mother's and Father's door I listened, my heart torn, my throat aching from trying not to cry. To hear them breathing heavily, peacefully—unsuspicious—was almost more than I could bear. Then cautiously I stole

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October MODERN ROMANCES—
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down the stairs—each one creaking and cracking.

In the kitchen, I stopped to write the note that Isabel had conceded. The only paper handy was the calendar. I tore off the month of March and wrote on the back of it:

DEAREST MOM AND DAD:
I am going away, but don't worry. I'm all right. I have money. Say goodbye to Madison and the children. Lots and lots and lots of love for you both. And don't look for me, please.
DOLLY

The tears were just rolling down my cheeks and I could hardly see what I wrote for the blur. I put the paper on the kitchen table and set the stove-lifter on it. I knew Mother would find it first thing in the morning when she made up the fire. Then I picked up my small bundle and went out the door.

How dark and cold it was!

Stumbling, sinking deep into the mud, brushing the blurring tears from my eyes, I made my way toward the station. When I could get a train, I didn't know. I hadn't even considered that. There might be no night trains—nothing till the milk-train at six in the morning. Uncle Ted always met that. He mustn't see me! I didn't want to waste all that time anyway. Mother would have found my note by five o'clock. She might telephone the station—or she and Father might follow with the car that Madison had bought second-hand for farm use.

I had been too stunned to think of any of those things before. But now panic began to creep up. I mustn't let them catch me! It had to be a clean getaway.

I shouldn't have written that note to Mother and Father. And I should have found out about trains and buses, made sure of everything first. I couldn't go on now. I'd have to go back before anybody found out. I'd have to wait till the following night.

MISERABLY I turned back, retracing my steps in the mud. I had so nerved myself to the agony of departure that I felt cold and lifeless now. The same thing would have to be gone through with again.

As I neared the house, a light suddenly went on in the kitchen. My heart crowded up into my throat. Had Mother gone to my room and found my bed empty? I stood still, in a panic, the inclination strong to turn and run. Then, from where I stood, I could see that it was not Mother but Madison. If he had come out to the kitchen for a drink, he might get it and return to his room without seeing the note on the table.

But no, he hadn't come for a drink. What was he doing? I crept close to the window. His violin case lay on the table—near my note!

He was seated at the table, his head resting on one hand, motionless, his violin grasped in the other.

Then he straightened up, passed a hand across his eyes and took up a pencil. From his portfolio he drew a sheet of blank music paper. In doing so, the stove-lifter was pushed along the table. Madison raised his case to see what was wrong—and I gave a cry of despair.

He picked up my note and began to read it. I must get in there before it was too late—before he called Mother and Father.

I don't know what I looked like as I flung open the kitchen door and rushed in. But Madison's face was white as he stared at the paper in his hand. His eyes startled, demanding—dark with shock.

"Dolly! What does this mean?"

"Nothing! Nothing! It doesn't mean a thing! Don't tell Mother or Dad! Give it to me, please! Oh, please forget. Don't say anything to *anybody*. Not even Isabel!

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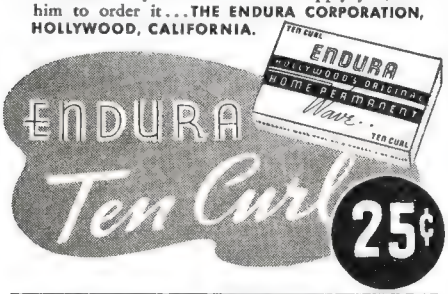

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Will you?" I jerked it from his hand, crumpled it, swiftly lifted the stove-lid, and threw it into the stove.

"You were running away," he said slowly, as if it hurt him.

"Yes, but—don't say anything!" My voice broke. My control gave way. "Why—why did you read it?" I cried. "I came back to get it."

"I'm sorry." His eyes reproached me. "You'd better sit down, Dolly. You're white as a sheet." He put out a hand and took mine, leading me to the chair by the table. "You're cold as ice, too."

"You won't tell anybody, please!"

"No-o-o, not if you promise me that you won't ever try to run away again. Don't you know you don't *have* to run away?"

I nodded my head, unable to answer.

"Then why did you?"

I still shook my head. What could I tell him?

"But you won't do it again?"

There was no answer I could make to that, either, so I kept still.

"Dolly," he persisted, "I know it isn't any of my business That's why I haven't said anything. I'm not trying to force your confidence now, but—of course I've known you were in trouble. And I've been very unhappy. You have been, too—terribly unhappy. But don't run away. You can't escape trouble that way. Think of the unhappiness you would cause your people."

"Do you think I haven't considered it? But it will be worse if I stay."

Madison looked at me with a wealth of love and sadness—and reproach in his eyes.

"When we are very unhappy, Dolly, we don't always see things clearly. The future looks blacker than it really is. Are you thinking of scandal and talk?"

"Yes," I gasped wildly, "but not the kind you mean. Not the neighbors and Aunt Sophie! Oh *please* don't ask any more! I can't explain. Don't ask me. But if I stay here there will be terrible unhappiness—for everybody. Much worse than if I go. So I want you to promise—just to forget—and let me go. Will you, please?"

"No, Dolly." He was very grave and his eyes were dark with pain. "I can't ask you to confide in me, if you don't want to. But even if it makes you—" he bit his lip, "even if it makes you hate me, I'm going to stop your running away. Because I know that later you will be glad. You see, Dolly," he came close, putting his hands on my shoulders, "I care so very much for you that I am willing to make you angry, if by so doing I can prevent your making a mistake."

HIS closeness, the expression of his eyes, the tone of his voice all set my poor heart to pounding. My emotions were already overwrought. He was stirring them to a stormy tumult that was making me dizzy. I couldn't look into those deep, tender eyes any longer—not with his beautiful words ringing in my ears: "I care so very much for you . . . !" I couldn't look without my heart bursting.

Didn't he know that my love for him was eating my happiness away? With a sob I dropped my head. Things were swimming about me. Desperately, desperately I wanted the feel of his strong, loving arms about me. Just once more! Crushed tight against him! His lips on mine! That would be heaven! And it couldn't hurt anyone! Then I would go away.

"Dolly—dear!" It came breathlessly, quivering from his soul. Then his arms slipped around me, gathering me up from the chair, holding me close. "You can't go! I love you too much. I want you here. Darling! Don't get so pale! Don't faint!"

I was close to fainting, yes. Fainting with the pure ecstasy of his embrace. And then his lips came tenderly, tremblingly to meet mine. Mad, mad seconds while my blood

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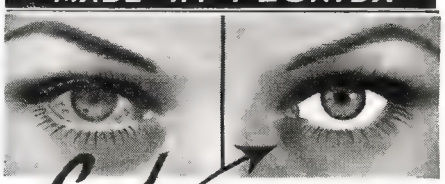

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whirled—and paradise was in Madison's kiss.

Then suddenly my heaven was shattered by Isabel's sharp, sneering voice—there she was standing in the doorway in her silk and lace negligee.

The powers of evil seem bent to make complete havoc of Dolly's already wrecked and broken life. What an opportunity is now offered the cruel, ruthless Isabel to vent her hate! In a moment she can reveal Dolly's secret to Madison—to the world. Can any mercy be expected from this selfish, inhuman woman? Read the answer to this question in the next installment of "Love-Stained" which appears in the

October MODERN ROMANCES
On Sale Everywhere September 1st

I Wouldn't Divorce Him

(Continued from page 35)

had spoken at last. The train seemed to crawl. I tried not to think that Phil might be dying or that I might be too late. I just sat in a kind of daze.

I was trembling when Nancy Ann and I walked down the long hall to our old apartment. As I raised my hand to press the bell a voice stopped me. "Phil isn't there."

I wheeled around. It was Eleanor. I felt my blood quicken in a surge of hatred. "You!" I burst out. "You—"

"I sent you the telegram." Eleanor's voice was almost toneless. "Phil doesn't know. It's all over between us; it has been for a long time. Phil is eating out his heart, blaming himself, and I thought you ought to come back because he needs you. He's at the office now, but he'll be home tonight."

I looked at her and felt a sudden deep pity. There were circles under her eyes and her face was thin. "Eleanor—I—"

"Don't thank me." She smiled wryly. "It was the least I could do. I'm going away. I was just waiting for you before I left." She turned abruptly, walked swiftly away.

All that day as I worked around the apartment I thought evening would never come. Nancy Ann went to sleep happy because she would see her daddy in the morning. Dinner was waiting and I was dressed in my prettiest frock when, with a pounding heart, I heard Phil's key turn in the lock.

I shall never forget my first sight of Phil. He stood in the doorway, his figure seeming to sag with weariness. His face was white and lined and there was a new grimness to his mouth. He stared unbelievingly at first, then: "Nancy!" It was an agonized cry.

We were in each other's arms at last.

"I've been such a fool," he said hoarsely, "I went mad for a while but it's all over. I—"

"I know, Phil. Eleanor sent for me. She told me everything. We mustn't blame her too much."

"Then you still want me back? You forgive me?" Tenderness was in his voice.

"Yes, Phil," I answered softly. "The year of grace is over. It has taught us both something; taught us our love was stronger than we knew, and too deep to be destroyed."

GOLDEN OPPORTUNITIES!

Turn to page 24 and read how easily you can win one of the seven cash prizes offered for letters of criticism. Virginia Alden and Kirby Eaton offer you three cash prizes on page 102. The Editor will buy your True Letter—page 14—or your Life Story—details on page 38.

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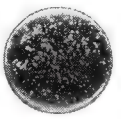

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Repeated laboratory, as well as practical, tests show that *ordinary* shampoos will not dissolve dandruff. Fitch's Dandruff Remover Shampoo dissolves every speck of dandruff instantly—under a money-back guarantee—and then washes it away. It rinses clean in hard or soft water. Equally as good for blondes as brunettes. *Try it today!* Sold at drug counters. Professional applications at beauty and barber shops.

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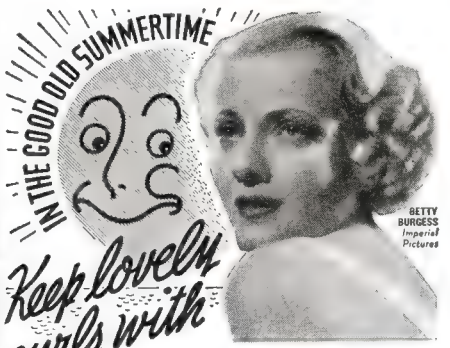

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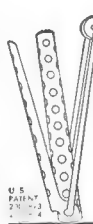

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Color of your hair?.....

(*Continued from page 91*)

"I wanted to get rid of Midge! Pat, are you crazy? Pat, you don't know what you're saying—"

"Well, how come the social worker came to your house first?"

"I don't know! I don't know, I tell you!" Then suddenly anger left her. She went over to Patrick, she put one slim, brown hand on his arm.

"Pat," she said, and it must have cost her modesty and her shyness everything to say it, "Pat, listen. You want Midge to stay with you, don't you? Well, so do I. There's one way they'll let you keep her. If you give her a mother. Even your Margaret would forgive you that. Pat, if you want me, I'll marry you." Her voice died to a whisper, and she stood in terror and shame.

"You—marry me?" he said dazedly. "But why should you? Why, Clelia? Have you thought what I am? A widower with a child. I haven't any money. Your parents would never let you. I've nothing to offer you—"

She said very low, then, "You might try giving me your heart."

And Patrick O'Connor said nothing at all, but took her arm almost roughly and marched her away from everyone else. And the next week, when baby Midge was discharged, there was no more talk of an agency worker stepping in, because Baby Midge was not going to a bachelor home. . . .

That was two years ago. And it's almost the end of the O'Connor saga, except for one last chapter. Early this summer Clelia O'Connor came for a day's outing to the Floating Hospital, bringing with her two children, Midge, aged three and a half, a handful to manage; and six-months-old Brother, whose full name is Patrick O'Connor, Jr.

Clelia had filled out and blossomed to more mature beauty. Her eyes were proud and happy. "See how healthy they are? Even in Bleecker Street I manage to keep them strong. I remember everything they taught me at Seaside Hospital when Midge was so sick; about diet, taking them in the sun, and all."

She had even better news. In the fall the whole family of Petrinis and O'Connors were moving to a two-family house in the suburb of Astoria. "Pa can have a store in the Italian section there, and Pat will have plenty of work. But the best of it is, there'll be clean air and a little grass around.

"So I guess we won't be asking for any more rides on the Floating Hospital. Making room for other kids who need it more."

Midge, rushing up to her, demanded attention. And the doctor watched, proud of what we had accomplished. Wishing, too, that there could be more room—room enough to accommodate thousands of parched slum children who never get a whiff of the sea air.

EVERY STORY TRUE!

A real life story—the actual account of a true experience that one close friend might confide in another —is the most interesting, impressive story you can find anywhere.

MODERN ROMANCES brings to you each month an outstanding collection of real life stories written by its own readers all over the country; true stories that reveal the perplexities of their lives, the secrets of their hearts, the joys and sorrows of their loves.

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October Modern Romances

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WITH *Maybelline* *Special* EYE CREAM

Aids in counteracting dry condition of skin around the eyes which causes wrinkles, crows-feet, etc. Smooths, softens and refines texture of skin. A rich cream containing the precious vitamin "D".

The first and worst signs of age or fatigue show their traces more definitely and quickly in the tender area around the eyes. Eye wrinkles, lined eyelids, crows-feet, puffiness and circles are apt to make their appearance early in this region. These tender and sensitive skin tissues lose their natural oils much more quickly than any other facial area.

Maybelline Eye Cream, unlike ordinary facial creams, is especially designed for the care and preservation of the youthful appearance of the skin around the eyes. The fine, rich, blended oils contained in this cream are highly beneficial to this area, and there is the added benefit of "sunshine" element in wonderful vitamin "D". Start giving your eyes this youthifying treatment *today* with Maybelline Eye Cream!

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Why suffer, when relief costs only a dime. A tested and approved Cro★Pax Foot Aid for every foot ailment... Corns, Bunions, Callouses and Weak Arches. You will be amazed at Cro★Pax value and delighted with Cro★Pax quality. Over 35 million Cro★Pax foot aids sold every year.

CRO★PAX *Corn Pads*

6 WATERPROOF PADS WITH 4 MEDICATED DISCS . . . 10c*

*Slightly higher in Canada

Good Housekeeping Bureau

CRO★PAX PRODUCTS · CLEVELAND, OHIO

(*Continued from page 66*)

face crimsoned. The flood of terror that seized me swept me near to fainting. What happened to me didn't matter, but Matt's warning about the ruin of the settlement school if scandal touched it, came back with terrible force. And besides, there was the danger to Matt's own safety—his precious life, itself, was at stake!

"No! No!" I shrieked out wildly. "You're lying! It's a dirty, filthy lie!"

God knows whether he believed me or not. If he showed definitely my desperate falsehood missed fire, I meant to seize the reins, start up the tired old mule, and do my very best to swerve the wagon, with us in it, over the cliff and into the tree-tops, far below. But for the moment, so infuriated at my defiance was he that the larger matter of my unfaithfulness had to wait. Swiftly he seized the mule whip before I could reach it, and stood up. Veins in his temples protruded like knotted cords.

"I'll learn you!" he grated furiously. "I'll make you crawl like a dog, damn you!"

The whip hissed through the air and a ribbon of flame curled about my shoulders. I screamed, but not with pain. Around the boulder a man had ridden, and at the sight of us he was instantly out of the saddle and behind the rock, while a rifle slid into view as evilly as a rattlesnake's glide.

"I've got the drop on you, Dismuke!" a voice cried fiercely.

Jared poised there, whip raised, as if stricken to stone, except for the flickering of his eyes, which darted like those of a ferocious animal caught in a trap.

"Don't move a finger! I got the message you sent—" the voice rang out tauntingly, "but it seems yo're too busy mistreatin' the pore little gal you wived with when she warn't no more'n a baby, to be shootin' *anybody,* on sight, least of all a Medway!"

From Jared's lips there came a snarl.

"Curse yore soul, Clyde Medway!"

More swiftly than my eyes could follow, he had bent and snatched from the wagon seat the rifle he'd carried constantly of late. From his half-crouching position, he whirled about and fired.

So simultaneously did the two reports come that I did not even realize Clyde Medway, too, had fired in the very moment of death until Jared pitched forward on his knees. His head lay still in my lap, face down; there was a hoarse rattle from his throat, and the blue flowers of my dress quickly stained to red.

So Fate wrote a bloody finish to my unhappy life as Jared Dismuke's wife.

It's Dr. Mary whom I can thank for securing me my happiness. With firm wisdom, she restrained Matt and me when we'd have rushed eagerly into marriage, and showed me how I must make myself fit to help Matt in his career, not bind and hamper him. The settlement school had an endowment fund for educating promising boys and girls. Although I'd been wife, mother and widow, my sixteen years made me still eligible to profit by this scholarship. There were two years of intensive study in the settlement, with glorious glimpses of Matt during college vacations. Then, while he was interning, I entered a hospital in another Southern city, graduating as registered nurse, just as he was ready to set up practice.

And so, I could go to the man I still loved with almost blind worship, not only as a wife, but as companion-adviser-helpmate—which, after all, should be only another synonym for "wife."

Life has been good to me—magnificently good. My childhood and youth were warped and blighted; my too early motherhood robbed Matt and me forever of the hope of children in our home. But he has me and his work and success, and I have him! And *that* is everything in the world I want and need!

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Say goodbye to ugly warts. A new liquid NOXACORN gets rid of them in few days. Also dries up pesky corns and calluses. Contains 6 ingredients including pure castor oil, "corn-aspirin", iodine. Absolutely safe. Approved by Good Housekeeping. Easy directions in package. 35¢ bottle at druggists, also at some 10¢ stores. Money back if it fails to remove any wart or corn.

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October

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Just wear our smart, lovely new fall dresses and show to friends. Take their orders (we deliver and collect) and you can make up to $16 in a week's time in your spare hours. Through our liberal Free Dress plan you can earn your entire wardrobe free—luxurious lingerie and beautiful silk hose, as well as smart new dresses. Fashion Frocks are Paris-styled and are sold direct from the factory only. They are nationally known and are guaranteed as advertised in Good Housekeeping Magazine.

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Attract and fascinate the man of your choice

Any woman or girl of ordinary intelligence, beautiful or plain, can learn from "Fascinating Womanhood" how to be and remain attractive to men. It tells you how to develop the power that is in you. Learn the principles of Charm that men cannot resist. Most cases of social failure and spinsterhood are due to lack of understanding man's psychology. Married or single you cannot afford to be without this secret knowledge. Send only 10c for the booklet, "Secrets of Fascinating Womanhood," an interesting outline of the secrets revealed in "Fascinating Womanhood." Mailed in plain wrapper.

PSYCHOLOGY PRESS, Dept. 29-J, St. Louis, Mo.

IF THIS WERE YOU-

MODERN ROMANCES WILL PAY $15, $10 AND $5 FOR THE THREE BEST LETTERS TELLING WHAT YOU WOULD DO IF THE PROBLEM PRINTED HERE WERE YOURS. LETTERS MUST BE SENT TO FRANK DRAPER, MODERN ROMANCES, 149 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY, BY SEPTEMBER FIRST. NONE OF THESE LETTERS WILL BE RETURNED TO CONTESTANTS

DEAR MRS. ALDEN:

I have read the problems in this department for many months, and the advice your readers have given. That's why I am asking your help, though I am a man and I haven't seen many men's problems here. But maybe you can help me anyway. If you do you will be helping two young people who are about at the end of their rope, and maybe do a real kindness to a third person, my mother.

To give you an idea of things, I will say that my father died when I was six years old. Since then there have been just Mother and myself for she never would marry again. You'll see why. I am ashamed to say that my father never was good to her. I have heard this from others as well as from her. Right after they married he started drinking again, though he promised her he would stop. I guess he was pretty hard and cruel.

When he drank, which was most of the time, he would come home and abuse her. I used to hide when I heard him coming. There would be a quarrel and Mother would cry for hours after he had quieted down in a drunken sleep. But she always protected me from him. She took more than one beating to save me. He always seemed to hate me.

As I say, when I was six he died. He worked in the yards of a packing plant and fell from a freight car they were spotting. They proved he had been drinking so Mother got only enough damages to bury him. In a way, I suppose, his death was a relief to her. Still, he had always supported us after a fashion, even if his wages were irregular and went mostly for whisky and for race-track pools.

So she had to go to work. She knew nothing but housework, and there was no chance to get paid for that, for everyone did their own. Things got pretty bad, and finally she got work in a factory. She used to leave me with the neighbor next door. The work was terribly hard and the hours were long, but she stuck to it. She made barely enough to pay the room rent and buy us food. My clothes she made from old clothes given to her.

When I was old enough and in school, I started selling papers. She made me go to school until I was thirteen. Then I balked, refusing to let her do all the work. I quit and got a job in a grocery store. It wasn't much, but it helped. It was lucky I did, for she broke under the strain and dust of the factory. The doctor sent her to the country to get stronger, and she helped a woman there with light chores around the house, paying that way for her board.

Later I got a better job in a garage. My mother came home and I kept things going awhile, and then bad luck hit us again. My boss lost his garage. One night I walked to the next town looking for work, and on the way home along the road a drunken driver hit me and went on. I woke up in a hospital where a truck driver had carried me after his lights had picked me up in the ditch.

Well, Mother went to work again though she still wasn't very strong. It was in a laundry this time, and when I came back from the hospital she would (*Please turn back to page* 13)

Have You a Problem?

Virginia Alden is here to help you solve your difficulties. If you prefer a man's viewpoint, address Kirby Eaton.

We want you not only to bring your problems to this department, but to offer advice to other readers.

For a personal answer, enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Write to Mrs. Virginia Alden, or Kirby Eaton, in care of MODERN ROMANCES, 149 Madison Avenue, New York City

Write to this department for practical advice on life and love

Printed in the U. S. A. by Art Color Printing Company, Dunellen, N. J.

Rosie Rieffenach, premier bareback rider of Ringling Bros. Circus, enjoys her Beech-Nut Gum.
Frederic Stanley
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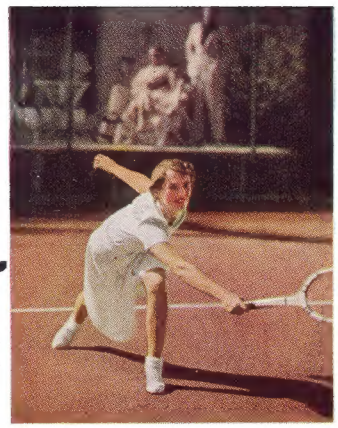
Mrs. Barclay Warburton, Jr. plays an exciting game of tennis—



TENNIS—Mrs. Warburton plays a man's game of tennis—hard-driving, strategic. Her appearance draws a gallery, whether she is playing at Palm Beach or in Southampton. As for smoking, "All I want to smoke," says Mrs. Warburton, "is Camels. Camels are so mild, they never get on my nerves!"

WHAT TO WEAR—Mrs. Warburton *(foreground above)* looks charmingly cool in white sharkskin, after a hard game of tennis. The pleated shorts, knee-top length—the new longer type—are preferred by this unerring stylist. "It's like a woman to enjoy costlier things. So, naturally, I smoke costlier tobaccos," says Mrs. Warburton. "Smoking Camels perks up my energy... gives me the grandest lift!"

TEA—Mrs. Barclay Warburton, Jr. entertains frequently at "Sandblown," her Southampton place, and at "Saracen Farm," the family estate near Philadelphia. "An appetizing dish," she remarks, "has a fuller flavor when a Camel keeps it company. There's no denying—smoking Camels at mealtime helps digestion!" As you smoke Camels, the flow of digestive fluids is increased. *Alkaline* digestive fluids that mean so much to mealtime enjoyment!

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